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J. H. MUIRHEAD

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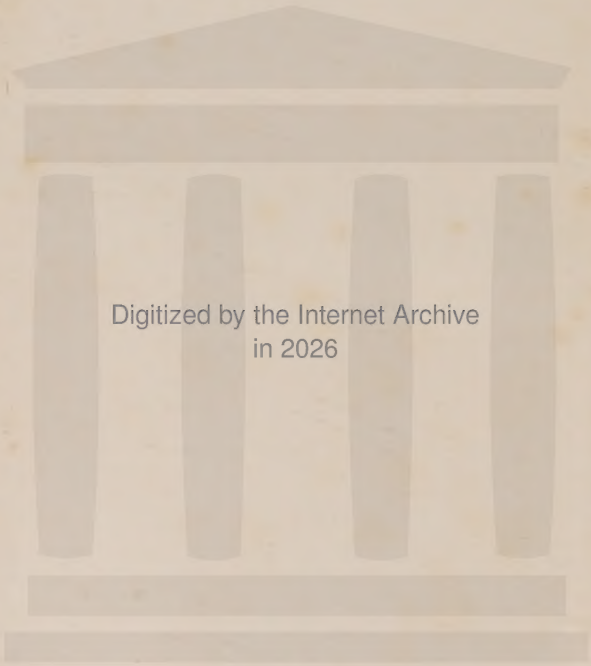

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THE ELEMENTS OF ETHICS

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"This life and Her to know
For Spirit."
GEORGE MEREDITH'S *Earth and Man.*

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TO

EDWARD CAIRD

BY THE PERMISSION OF

HIS WIFE

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THIS book was written in 1891 with a special view to the wants and difficulties of students for whom there was at that time far less easily available assistance than there fortunately is in the present year of grace. In issuing a new edition I have had to encounter the difficulty of trying to bring it as far as possible up to date without at the same time altering it out of all recognition as an elementary manual. Through the kindness of Mr. Murray I have been delivered from the difficulty of having to consider the exigencies of stereotype plates—for an author anything but a leaden rule—and have thus been enabled to rewrite large portions besides introducing many detailed alterations. The chief additions will be found in the middle and in the Appendices at the end of the book. My aim in making them has been to bring the ethical theory of the text into

closer connection with recent psychology on the one hand and sociology on the other, while remaining true to the original design of furnishing the student of the science of ethics with an introduction into the main structure of the building rather than exploring its recesses or extending its boundaries.

BIRMINGHAM, *January*, 1910.

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BOOK I

THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS

CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS.

§ 1. How there comes to be a Problem at all.

PHILOSOPHY, said Plato, begins in wonder. The child who wonders why his wax doll shuts its eyes, or his kitten wags its tail, has already set forward on the path that leads to philosophy and science. The differences among us that distinguish learned from ignorant depend merely upon the extent to which we have carried our wonder; whether we are content to acquiesce in superficial answers, or still find our desire unsatisfied, and press on with a new question so soon as our first is answered. Thus, astronomy begins in the wonder and perplexity caused by the contradictions and confusions of the apparent movements of the heavens. The various systems that have succeeded one another—the Ptolemaic, the Copernican, the Newtonian—have differed only in the relative satisfactoriness of the solutions they have offered. The question I propose to discuss in this chapter is, What kind of wonder is that in which ethics begins? To what does that wonder attach? How does it first rise? How does it express itself? The question of the precise subject-matter of ethics is deferred. Here I would ask why there should be a science of ethics at all, rather

than what the science of ethics is. It may, indeed, seem absurd to ask why it should exist before we know what it is. But in this case the "what" is a good deal determined by the "why." At the same time, it must be admitted that some of the definitions and results, reached in a later part of this essay, are taken for granted in this chapter and the next.

Etymologies rarely help us much in acquiring accurate conceptions of the present use of words. They are as often as not misleading.* In the present case, etymology will give us considerable help. Ethics is precisely what its derivation (ἦθος) implies, the science of moral character. We are, moreover, further helped if we carry our etymology a step further back, and recollect that ἦθος is connected with ἔθος, custom or habit. Similarly, if we revert to the older name under which our science was known, viz., Moral Philosophy,† we find that this means the philosophy of *mores*, which signifies in Latin, primarily customs or habits, secondarily the habits of moral agents in respect to moral action, *i.e.*, character. Assuming, then, that ethics is the science of character, and that character means, according to its etymology, customs or habits of conduct,‡ our question is, How does that

* To take a relevant instance to define Politics, in terms of its etymology, as the science of civil life, and go on to argue that politicians were those who possessed this science, would clearly be a mistake. Whately (*Logic*, p. 118) would remind us of the "Fallacy of Etymology."

† Compare "Physics" and "Natural Philosophy."

‡ "Character," in our modern view, carries with it greater inwardness than this definition seems to suggest. This is quite in conformity with the more subjective aspect which all questions of ethics assume in modern discussions as compared with ancient. Here it is immaterial whether we define character as habit of conduct or as habit of *will*. See below, p. 56.

"wonder," which is the source of all science, come to attach to national and individual habits of conduct?

The very statement of this question suggests a difficulty. For at first it might appear as though habitual actions were just that part of conduct which had ceased to perplex us or cause us any trouble. All habits may be shown psychologically to be themselves the completed form of answers to practical problems. The habit of moving one's limbs in walking is the solution of the problem of balancing oneself first on one leg and then on another, and executing a forward movement at the same time. When it has become a *habit*, the solution is complete. We are no longer troubled with the problem; we are not even conscious that it is one. Similarly with habits of *conduct* in a nation or individual. The habit, for instance, of self-restraint in matters of the body, which the ancients called Temperance, is the solution of the problem of the relative claims to satisfaction of apparently contradictory impulses, *e.g.*, the impulse of a man to go to the public-house, and the impulse to go home to his wife. As a habit, or element of character, it is that solution carried to perfection, so that the perfectly temperate man is no longer conscious of any conflict or problem as he passes the tavern.

There may, of course, still rise questions as to the details of the conduct determined by the habit. Thus it may remain for the temperate man to decide how much he may drink, at what time, what kind of liquor, and so on. But these are not ethical questions in the sense above referred to. They are a matter of insight into the circumstances of a particular case, corresponding to the questions of when, how far, and how fast we

shall walk. A hundred such questions may rise in a man's mind in a day, without ever bringing him face to face with the ethical question proper. This latter does not refer primarily to the details of conduct under a habit, but to the habit itself. It is not, What acts are just, courageous, temperate? but, What is justice, courage, temperance? And so the difficulty recurs: How can habits of conduct, which are themselves solutions of practical problems in the life of a nation or an individual, ever become the subject of that doubt and perplexity from which science springs?

The answer briefly is, that so long as the solutions are adequate to the existing circumstances, *i.e.*, so long as there is a congruity between the habits of conduct of a nation or individual and the practical problems of life, so long the ethical question remains in abeyance. On the other hand, it is the appearance of new problems, of which the early habits offer no solution, that first throws doubt upon the validity of custom. To see how this is, let us consider the several stages into which, in this respect, the life of progressive nations naturally falls.

§ 2. General Description of the Conditions under which the Problem rises.

For the purpose in hand we might divide these stages into three. First, there is the period of the formation of the moral habits of a people, the growth of its morality. This corresponds in the individual's life to the period of childhood and early youth. It is the period of its education. Next we have the period of action, corresponding to early manhood. This is the period in which a balance or equilibrium has been established between the various forces that reside within the nation.

Externally, this equilibrium exhibits itself in the harmony of classes, the "balance of the constitution," the reconciliation of interests. Internally, it means the adequacy of the moral aptitudes and habits of the people, both in force and variety, to meet the calls of its daily life. The habits, which in the previous stage were, so to speak, in the gristle, have now hardened into a system of traditional morality, the maxims of which are embodied in the received moral code, and entrenched behind national institutions of State and Church. I have called this the age of action, because it corresponds generally to the period of a nation's best energies and most brilliant achievements. Civil discord is at an end, and the nation is free to expand its power abroad.* Lastly we have the stage of a deeper form of disturbance, accompanied by reflection and effort directed to re-adaptation. The balance of internal powers, which was the characteristic feature of the second stage, is undermined by the development of new forces, chief among which is the intellectual progress that has gone hand in hand with the enlargement of the nation's experience, as its power extended. Corresponding to this progress will be the rise of new interests, industrial, literary, artistic, philosophical. These have to find a place for themselves in the national life. This they can usually only do at the expense of existing habits, institutions and formulas. The new wine *has* to be poured into the old bottles. The spirit is contrary to the form. A period of intellectual and political

* As examples of this stage might be mentioned the Jewish nation in the time of David, the Athenians in the age of Pericles, the Romans after the establishment of internal peace by the settlement of the long-standing quarrel between patricians and plebeians.

ferment sets in; the age is marked by doubt, perplexity, and hesitation; it is disconcerted by the apparent baselessness of many forms and institutions upon which society has hitherto seemed to rest; the moral law, the fabric of the constitution, religion itself, seem shaken to their foundations; the only choice for individuals seems to be either to close their eyes to the contradictions of the present, and seek refuge in the old habits of faith, or to appeal to reason as the "spirit which denies"—the illumination that sees nothing in the old forms but the tatters of a "creed outworn."

But these are alternatives which cannot fail to startle and repel. The first is to prove traitor to the intelligence which discerned the new problem, and therefore in the last resort to morality itself; the second is to do violence to some of the deepest instincts of the heart. It is at this stage that recourse is had to a method which opens a third possibility besides the simple acceptance and the simple rejection of the morality and institutions of the past. This is to try to *understand* them. It seeks to know whence they really came, what they really mean. It blinks no difficulty which the spirit of scepticism can raise. It ignores no claim which tradition puts forward. But it goes its own way, regardless of both, with a deeper doubt than scepticism, because it doubts the conclusions of scepticism, and a deeper faith than traditionalism, because it believes in the reason which traditions embody, and which is the source of what power they still possess.

§ 3. Historical Illustration from the Case of Greece.

Historically, the best illustration, both of the decomposition of national habits and traditions, owing to the

growth of national life, and of the rise out of this decomposition of a rational system of morals and polity, founded upon the effort to understand current forms and, by revealing both their value and their inadequacy, to prepare the way for progress—is to be found in the actual origin of the study of ethics in the age of the Sophists in Greece. This is not the place to give any detailed account of the state of opinion out of which the great systems of Plato and Aristotle grew.* It is sufficient, in illustration of what has been already said, to remind the reader that the Sophists lived at a time of great political, industrial, and intellectual expansion. Athens, from a small city-state, had become the head of a great empire. New ideas, new interests, new demands, had produced a vague restlessness and dissatisfaction with older forms of thought and life. In the hands of the Sophists the criticism which was the life and breath of the time spread from attacks on external forms and abstract theories to the ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, piety and impiety. By their means a general sense of the contradictions that were latent in the traditional morality came to pervade the educated classes in Athens. A condition of doubt, uncertainty, and general perplexity was created, out of which in due time rose, under the influence of Socrates, the first sketch of a science of morality.

§ 4. Illustration from Our Own Time.

But we do not require to go to Athens in the time of the Sophists to find an illustration of the rise of a science of ethics. Our own time, resembling the age

* See Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*; Grant's *Aristotle*, Vol. I., Essay ii.; Erdmann's *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 69 foll.

just referred to in many other respects, resembles it in nothing more than this—that it is a time of moral and political unrest, resulting in a new demand among large numbers of the educated classes to understand the meaning of the moral code under which they live, and the institutions that support it. To mention only a few of the contradictions and seemingly irreconcilable antitheses which criticism has made apparent, and which harass and perplex our age, there is, in the field of religion, the opposition between faith and reason, science and religion, authority and private judgment. In politics there is the antithesis between the individual and the state; on the one side are asserted "the rights of man" on the other "the duties of citizenship." "Man *versus* State"* may be said to have been the *cause célèbre* of the last century and a half. Coming to more distinctly moral questions, we have the conflict between self and others, trade sex or class and community, self-interest and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, pleasure and duty, freedom and necessity, law and liberty, circumstance and character, and other sharp-horned dilemmas that start from the ground of our common life when the light of criticism is turned upon it.

For all these and similar contradictions no solution is possible, except upon condition of a thorough-going analysis of the basis of individual and social morality, the origin, the meaning, the authority of the moral habits of civilised man, and the social, political, and religious institutions in which they have entrenched themselves. It is under pressure of these and kindred difficulties that the science of ethics has taken a new start in our own

* See Herbert Spencer's book with this title

time. It is indeed true that ethics has always been more or less studied in modern times as a department of philosophy. Under its older name of moral philosophy it has always had an honoured place in systems of metaphysics. What is characteristic of our time in this regard is not the rise of a new study, but the new significance that has come to attach to an old one. The practical importance of the science of ethics, as an indispensable aid towards the solution of problems that vex our daily life, has come to be more fully recognised. Among other evidences of this recognition may be mentioned the rise of societies to promote its study,* the institution of the *International Journal of Ethics*,† and generally the place that is now claimed for it as no longer a subordinate branch of philosophy, but an independent science.‡ The validity of this latter claim I shall have occasion hereafter to examine.§ Meantime it may be noted as an illustration of the new importance attaching to the study that attempts have been made to detach it from the cumbrous adjuncts of logic and metaphysics, and to present it as a science in no respect differing, save in the complexity of its subject-matter and the practical importance of its conclusions, from other empirical sciences.‖

* There are Ethical Societies in London, Cambridge, Edinburgh, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and elsewhere, all of recent growth.

† First published October 1890 (Fisher Unwin).

‡ On the general question of the dissolution of the ancient partnership between philosophy and its various branches, see article by James Ward, *Mind*, Vol. XV., No. 58.

§ See pp. 24, 32 below.

‖ See Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, pp. 6, 7. Also S. Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, p. 80

§ 5. Objection to the Study.

It is upon this ground that we must meet the objection which is sometimes brought against moral philosophy from the practical side. Since Aristotle * there have not been wanting those to whom the discussion of the validity of moral distinctions has appeared to have an "unsettling" effect upon the student. It has been thought to undermine his belief in the absoluteness of these distinctions. Even where, as in Utilitarianism and current forms of Idealism, their validity is strenuously maintained, philosophy has yet been accused of setting aside the immediate authority of conscience or Divine Law in favour of the secondary end of human happiness —or well-being, otherwise interpreted—and so, by encouraging the tendency to reflect and refine upon common duties, of opening the door to casuistry and self-deception.

The answer to this and all similar objections is clear and decisive. In the first place, it is no longer a question, as is assumed by those who urge them, whether we shall consent, or refuse to consent, to the discussion of ethical problems. The spirit of the time has taken the choice out of our hands; and the doubts and difficulties which beset the common interpretation of moral responsibility are the commonplaces of current literature. No educated person can escape them. It is merely a question whether we shall encounter them in the spirit of amateurs trusting for a solution to isolated *aperçus*, or with the serious purpose of the scientific student who may hope to reach a systematic view of the whole field. It might indeed be suggested that I omit to mention a third alternative.

* Who thought the study unsuited to young men. *Ethics*, I. 1.

For have there not been some, and those the finest spirits of their time, who like John Henry Newman, have been earnest seekers after truth, and yet because in this particular field have seen no possibility of light have preferred to fall back on the authority of conscience and feeling, where it is claimed that "beyond these voices there is peace"? It is undoubtedly possible, as we have seen, to shut our eyes to the issues at stake, and renounce the attempt to re-establish intellectual order in the field of moral ideas; but this is a solution which is not likely to satisfy the bolder and more energetic spirits upon whom the hope of the future depends. Nor do those who adopt this course really get "beyond," they only get away from these voices. It is a retrograde, not a forward step. The wound in the moral peace of the age has been inflicted by the scientific reason, and it is scientific reason which, like the spear of Ithuriel, must heal the wound which it has itself made.

In the second place, from the side of particular duties, it ought to be pointed out that to set aside the immediate impulse to act in accordance with a fixed rule in favour of a careful analysis of the conditions of the case, and of the probable effects of our action, is not always evil, as is apt to be assumed by those who make the above objection. On the contrary, it may be a form of conscientiousness which, in the complex state of civilisation in which we live, requires in every way to be encouraged. This in itself has nothing in common with the casuistical desire to find in the circumstances an excuse for neglect of an obvious duty. It is only because the reflective effort to understand the significance of our actions has been too uncommon in the past that it has come to be

associated with this immoral attitude of mind. It is true, as we shall hereafter see, that moral philosophy and casuistry as reasoned systems alike begin in the perception that traditional rules are an insufficient guide to moral action; but the casuistical spirit, which seeks in the manysidedness of action an escape from the claim of duty, had not to wait for moral philosophy for the opportunity of asserting itself; nor will the denial of the rights of the reflective reason in this field have any effect in suppressing or restraining a tendency which is, in fact, the outcome of moral insensibility, not of intellectual alertness. It might, on the contrary, be reasonably maintained that the habit of forecasting the consequences of conduct with a view to estimating its value, which, on the view before us, is encouraged by moral philosophy, is the best preservative against that self-deception for which casuistry is only another name.

§ 6. Effect of the Study of Ethics on our General View of Life.

If now, reverting to our definition of ethics as the science of moral habits, the reader ask what we may expect to be the practical outcome of such an investigation on our general view of the nature and authority of these habits, I answer that that effect will be twofold. First, it will necessarily be in part destructive. This is implied in saying that it is a science. Science is critical. It criticises, corrects; and in doing so dissolves the views of commonsense. Ethical science does so no less. Some familiar distinctions, some effete prohibitions and injunctions, will have to be given up. With these will go much that passes in popular judgment for moral conduct, and even types of character that have won general

admiration. Moral law, like statute law, grows by constant alteration and accretion; and just as many contradictory laws, passed at various times, without reference to one another, may remain on the statute-book, so the moral code of any period may contain many elements loosely compacted and imperfectly reconciled with one another. The result of the application of scientific criticism to these will be like the revisal and codification of statute law.

Similarly, in reference to the social institutions that support existing morality, we may expect that our results will have a negative and critical side. These also, like the moral code, are an unconscious growth. Like the organs of animal life, they were evolved in response to vital needs. Yet, as there are survivals and rudimentary organs among the parts of animals, so in a community forms and institutions may survive from a former state of life. One of the first results of ethical science will be the perception of this fact.

So too, with regard to the authority on which the moral law is based, we may expect, in the first instance, a critical and apparently negative result. As man's notions of this authority were formed in the ages of poetry and mythology, we may expect the ordinary notions about it to be tinged with the colour of their origin. In regard to these, as in other respects, ethics "is nothing if it is not critical."

But if in its first *rôle* as critical reflection seems to be attacking the basis of morality, this is only the superficial aspect of its work.* In its deeper aspect it

* In all scientific education there is a stage in which destruction seems to be the chief work of science. Plato calls it the "puppy dog" stage.

is reconstructive. It comes, not to destroy, but to fulfil. It does so by separating the essential from the unessential, the permanent from the transient, the spirit from the form of moral and social institutions, and by leaving only that which is seen to be organically connected with human nature, it gives it a value and a sanctity which, as merely traditional, it never could possess. How it does so it is the object of what follows in some degree to explain.

CHAPTER II.

CAN THERE BE A SCIENCE OF ETHICS?

§ 7. Difficulty in the Conception of such a Science.

In the preceding chapter a sketch has been given of the circumstances in which the practical need for a science of ethics arises, the general nature of its problem, and the kind of answer to it that may be expected. We have now to seek for a convenient point from which to start in the endeavour to give an outline of its contents. But before we do so several preliminary difficulties that rise in connection with the very idea of a science of this kind require to be noticed.

Accepting the general definition (given on p. 4) of ethics as the science of character or conduct, in what sense, we may ask, can we speak of such a science? Science, it is said, has for its subject-matter necessary truths. It traces effects to their causes, formulates general laws as to the way in which these causes act, and from these generalisations, or the combinations of them, proceeds to deduce new consequences. The last of these processes is especially distinctive of a science. No science is considered complete until it is shown to be possible to predict particular effects from the

known laws of their causes. According to this idea of a science, it becomes at once evident that, in assuming the possibility of a science of character and conduct, we assume that these entities are the effects of certain definable causes, that it is possible to formulate general laws of their origin and course of development, and that when the science is perfected we may expect to be able to make confident predictions regarding them on the ground of our previous generalisations. Thus at the very outset we seem to make certain assumptions as to the nature of human character and conduct, the discussion of which has always been one of the chief subjects of moral philosophy. For is it not contended by a large and powerful school of writers that "character and conduct are precisely that which cannot be explained as the resultant of discernible and calculable forces? They are chiefly dependent upon the human will, and we have no right at the outset of our investigation to make an assumption which prejudges the question as to the freedom of volition. If the will is free, the whole conception of a science of ethics falls to the ground: there is a variable and incalculable element in character and conduct which vitiates all its results."

This objection is, however, based upon a misconception of the nature of the science. It is indeed possible to treat human conduct as a natural phenomenon on the same plane as other physical events, such as the motions of the planets, or the evolution of species. The aim of the science upon this supposition will be to formulate general laws of the action of human agents in specific circumstances, and thence deduce the course it will take in nations and individuals upon

the recurrence of similar conditions. A science of this kind, difficult as it might prove to be to work it out in detail, is at least conceivable, and it would certainly proceed upon the assumption that the freedom of the will is a delusion, or at any rate may be neglected for purposes of the science.* But such a science would have little or nothing to do with ethics. Ethics is not primarily concerned with *conduct as a fact in space and time*,—something done here and now, following from certain causes in the past, and succeeded by certain results in the future. It is concerned with the *judgment upon conduct*, the judgment that such and such conduct is right or wrong. The distinction is important, and has been made the basis of a general classification of the sciences. On the one hand, we have those sciences which are concerned with facts or phenomena of nature or of mind, actual occurrences which have to be analysed, classified, and explained. The movement of the earth round the sun is such a fact. Astronomy may be taken as the type of this class of sciences. On the other hand, there are those sciences which have to do primarily, not with facts in space and time, but with judgments about those facts. It might be said, indeed, that all facts present themselves to us as judgments. "The earth moves round the sun" is a fact, but it is also a judgment. There is a distinction, however (to go no deeper), between a judgment *of* fact and a judgment *upon* fact, corresponding to the distinction between "judgment" in its logical sense of "proposition" and "judgment" in its judicial sense of "sentence." It is with judgment in the latter sense that ethics has to do. It deals with

* Mill's sketch of a science of ethology in *Logic*, Book V., is interesting in this connection.

conduct as the subject of judicial judgment, not with conduct merely as predicated in time. On this ground ethics has been classed with what have been called "normative" sciences, to which Logic, or the science of the judgment of truth or falsity, and Æsthetics, or the science of the judgment of beauty or ugliness, also belong. Ethics has to do with the norm, or standard of right and wrong, as logic has to do with the standard of truth, æsthetics with the standard of beauty. It is concerned primarily with the laws that regulate our judgments of right and wrong, only secondarily with the laws that regulate conduct as an event in time.*

§ 8. **What may be Expected of a Science of Ethics?**

If we now come closer to the question of the present chapter, and ask in what sense there can be said to be a science of moral judgment, we open up a still more serious difficulty. Although the full import of our answer can only be apprehended after the claim that is now to be made on behalf of ethics has been justified by the detailed exposition of the theory itself, still it may be permissible to state here generally what we may expect as the result of the present inquiry.

Before attempting to do so, it is necessary, however, to define more clearly than we have yet done what a science in the strict sense is, and what we require that it should do for us. Wherein, in astronomy for example, does the scientific differ from the ordinary way of looking at things? In the first place, it *observes accurately*. Every one knows that the heavenly bodies change their

* See note at the end of the chapter, and p. 37 below.

position with reference to the earth and one another; astronomical science demands accurate observations and descriptions of these changes. In the second place, science distinguishes different kinds of the phenomena thus observed, and *classifies* them according to their most significant differences. Astronomy soon arrives at the distinction between our own sun and planetary system, and more distant suns. Within this it distinguishes moons from planets, planets that have cooled sufficiently to permit of life upon their surface from those that have not, and so on. In the third place, science must not only accurately observe and classify: it must *explain*. By this it is not meant that there may not be sciences which do no more than classify the phenomena with which they deal. Such a conception of their function is illustrated by the earlier stages of most sciences, which, in their later development, have outgrown it. What is meant is that we must always refuse to rest in such a limitation. We can never sit down satisfied, as some Positivist writers would seem to wish to have us do, with the mere discovery of likenesses and differences between phenomena; but are forced to look beyond these external relations, and to seek for a principle, in the light of which we can explain them. What do we mean by this further claim?

Without entering into any detailed discussion of what is meant by "explanation," which is a question for logic, not for ethics, I may define shortly what I wish the reader here to understand by this term. To explain a phenomenon or occurrence, in the proper sense of the term, it is not sufficient, as popular language implies, to find the cause or agency which

produced it.* Explanation includes this, but is not exhausted by it. A thing can only properly be said to be explained when it is seen necessarily to flow from the "sum of the conditions" which the science in question takes into account. But these conditions, when accurately apprehended, are never merely a series of successive phenomena, or even an aggregate of co-existent phenomena, but the relations of the parts or members of an *organic system* to one another. In such a system it is to be observed that each separate element which calls for explanation appears at once in the twofold relation of cause and effect, conditioning and conditioned; so that this distinction, which is commonly assumed as the basis of explanation, may be said to have disappeared in the form under which we are finally required to think of the several phenomena under investigation. We may accordingly go a step further, and, setting aside the definition of explanation as the sum of the conditions, substitute for it a still more accurate one. A phenomenon is in this sense only fully explained when enough is known of the particular system in question to permit us to apprehend the phenomenon in the light of the known relations of the other parts, and therefore as a coherent member of the whole. To take a simple instance, the phenomenon of the dawn is explained in the sense described when we see it to be the necessary result of the sum of conditions which we know as the planetary system; in other words, when we know enough of the mutual relations of the various members of the planetary system, and the laws of their motions, to see that these involve the turning of our part of the earth to the light

* For this kind of explanation in its three forms, see Mill's *Logic*, Book III., ch. xii.; Bain's *Inductive Logic*, Book III., ch. xii.

of the sun at a particular moment in the manner we call the sunrise.*

By this third stage, therefore, in the scientific account of any phenomenon, we mean the process by which it is shown to be a coherent part of a system or organism. It is shown to be "required" by the conditions previously known to prevail in a particular field or group of facts. As so explained, it is seen to be necessarily involved in these conditions so soon as we realise what they mean; in other words, on the assumption of the existence of the system, to be a necessary truth. Of course the particular group is itself related to other groups, and ultimately to the whole system of known reality; so that the complete explanation of any fact, if it is legitimate to speak of completeness in such a matter, would require that we should see it to be necessarily involved in the constitution of the cosmos as a whole. Science however, *quâ* Science, contents itself with a perceived coherence of its data relatively to a limited sphere, spatial, mechanical, chemical, or biological. On the other hand, the ultimate relations of these spheres to one another, and to

* A still simpler example of this process of explanation would be the adjustment of a piece in a child's picture puzzle. The "explanation" of its apparently strange shape and jumble of coloured surface is only found when its place has been assigned to it in the organic structure of the whole. With the above statement of the nature of explanation in general we may compare Comte's view of what is required for the explanation of social phenomena in particular. It is the more significant, as it is in manifest contradiction to his frequently expressed view of what we may look for in science in general. Social phenomena, he says (*Pos. Pol.*, Vol. II., p. 95), are explained in the scientific sense of the word when they "have been connected with the whole of the existing situation and the whole of the preceding movement."

reality as a whole, is the point of view distinctive of Philosophy.

Can ethics be said to be explanatory in any similar sense? I believe that it can. It aims at exhibiting the different forms of moral judgment as necessarily flowing from the known conditions of the individual and social life of man. To the unreflective, moral judgments appear to be isolated phenomena, without relation to one another or to other facts of experience. Into a world of otherwise strictly correlated and comprehensible facts and events, there appear to be intruded arbitrary pronouncements of condemnation or approval. It is the work of ethics, as here conceived, to bring these judgments into organic relation with one another and with the known facts of experience; to strip them of their apparent arbitrariness, and clothe them with the livery of reason, by showing them to be necessary postulates of that organism of relations which we know as human society. On the other hand, human life is only part of the life of the world as a whole, and no "completeness" of explanation can be looked for within these limits. It is this, combined with the importunateness with which the human mind presses forward to some such explanation, that explains the close connection between ethics and metaphysics hereafter to be noted.

§ 9. Comparison of Ethics as so interpreted with Intuitionist and Theological Ethics.

The nature and extent of this claim will be more obvious if we contrast it shortly with two other views that have been held as to the nature and limits of

ethical investigation. Attempts have been made to limit the scope of the science to the description and classification of the utterances of what is called Moral Sense. The only ultimate account which we can give, it is said, of those pronouncements as to right and wrong which we call moral judgments, is that in the presence of certain conditions (*e.g.*, one's neighbour's purse and a desire for money) moral sense pronounces certain judgments (*e.g.*, that it is wrong to take what is not one's own). Ethics has to do with the description and classification of these judgments. It cannot further explain them. They rest upon an innate feeling or instinct that defies further analysis. As against this view we should, of course, admit the existence of what is called moral sense or feeling,—the consideration of which is an important part of ethics,—but we should refuse to regard it as an unanalysable utterance of a special faculty. It has an origin, a history, and a place among the other data of the moral life which it is the function of ethics to unfold. Similarly, its *dicta* (though it is not at all clear how a "sense" can speak as well as feel) are not isolated utterances (as such they would be wholly unintelligible), but derive what significance they have from their relation to an objective system of mutually related parts or elements.

Another view traces the moral judgments or decrees which are the subject-matter of ethics back to the will of an external authority. They are communicated to man partly through conscience, partly through revelation, but in both cases are in the last resort to be explained by a direct reference to this Supreme Will, not to human life and experience as such. It is not necessary to enter on disputed points of theology to see that, whatever the

connection between morality and religion (and it is a very close one) may be, this view amounts either to a denial of any science of ethics in the proper sense of the word, or to the logical fallacy of *petitio principii*. If it be meant that no account can be given of the good and the right, except that they are the will of God, there is an end of all inquiry. We may be told by conscience and revelation what is right, but to the question of science, *Why* is it right? *why* am I bound to accept this authority? there is no answer. As Shaftesbury puts it, "If the mere Will, Decree or Law of God be said absolutely to constitute right and wrong, then are these latter words of no significancy at all. For thus, if each part of a contradiction were affirmed for truth by the supreme Power, they would consequently become true. Thus if one person were decreed to suffer for another's fault, the sentence would be just and equitable. And thus in the same manner, if arbitrarily and without reason some beings were destined to endure perpetual ill, and others as constantly to enjoy good, this also would pass under the same denomination. But to say of anything that it is just or unjust on such a foundation as this is to say nothing or to speak without meaning."* If, on the other hand, it be meant merely that the good and the right become known to us through the direct action of another will upon our minds and consciences, *i.e.*, that we know that this is right, that wrong, because God tells us, the truth of this account will be a question for theology and metaphysics; but, true or false, it does not help us to the solution of the ethical question. We are still left to ask, Why is it right? Is it right because God wills

* *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, Book I., Pt. iii., § 2.

it, or does God will it because it is right? In the former case we are back at the denial of the possibility of any science of ethics; in the latter case we are still at the beginning of our investigation, and our explanation of the judgment of right is still to seek.

I claim then for ethics that it is a science in as full a sense as any one of the physical or material sciences. It aims at *explaining* moral judgments, as astronomy aims at explaining the motions of the planets, or geometry the properties of figures, by showing their place in a system which cannot exist as a consistent whole (or, in other words, cannot be recognised by reason as existing at all) without them. Thus, to anticipate, the judgment that theft is wrong is not explained by merely referring it to a moral sense or feeling, or to the decree of a divine will, but by showing that disregard for other people's property is inconsistent with that system of mutual relations which we call social life.

Note.

The distinction drawn in § 7 between natural and normative is not proposed as the basis of a philosophical classification of the sciences. (For such a classification, in which ethics, or the Science of the Good appears as the last term in the series, see Plato's *Republic*, Book VI., p. 507 foll., and for an elaborate modern expansion of it, Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, Miss Martineau's English Abridgment, Vol. I.) The distinction is adopted in the text to emphasise the point under discussion, and must not be pressed. More especially I should desire to exclude the common assumption that ethics aims at laying down *rules*, or offering direct instruction for the conduct of life. That the study has important practical bearings, I have already implied in Chapter I.; that many suggestive practical

hints are to be found in writers upon ethics, and even that for the work of the preacher and teacher of morality it constitutes by far the most important intellectual preparation, I willingly admit; but just for this reason I hold it to be all the more important to realise the distinction between the legitimate aim of analysing our moral judgments and "defining the ideal involved in life," and the quite illegitimate attempt to lay down any set of general precepts as the foundation of an art of life. As Professor Mackenzie puts it, "For the communication of the art of conduct 'example is better than precept,' and experience is better than either; so that even if it were the business of ethics to lay down precepts, these precepts would still not suffice for instruction in the art of life." For the further discussion of the relation of ethics to practice see the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

SCOPE OF THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS.

§ 10. In what sense Ethics differs from the Natural Sciences.

Having indicated in what sense ethics may be said to resemble other sciences, it remains for me further to define its general character by pointing out more particularly in what respects it differs from them.

It differs from all the natural sciences in that :—

(1) It starts from the assumption of the existence of a *rule or standard* of judgment, not from physical events and the causes which determine them. This has been already explained. It will require limitation hereafter, but need not now detain us. It involves, however, a further distinction which it is of the utmost importance to note.

(2) Seeing that it deals with judgments consciously passed by man upon himself and others, it rests upon the assumption that man is not merely a part of nature and the blind servant of her purposes, but is *conscious* of being a part, and of being subject to her laws. He not only behaves in a certain way in presence of particular circumstances, as oxygen may be said to "behave" in the presence of hydrogen, but he is conscious of his behaviour in its relation to himself and

others. It is on the ground of this consciousness that he passes judgment upon it. Hence any attempt to treat the science of human conduct and character as merely a branch of material science is doomed to failure. The "explanations" in the field of ethics cannot be in terms of the laws and hypotheses that are applicable in the field of physical science. The laws of motion or the principle of the conservation of energy are here out of court. It is true that human conduct may be described as a mode or form of energy, but the important thing is the "form,"—it is *conscious* energy, and that makes all the difference. Among other things it involves as a consequence that the powers and potentialities of the human will are upon the increase, and that the law of the moral world is more appropriately expressed as one of the "increase" rather than "the conservation of energy." *

Nothing has created more confusion in the history of science than the attempt to take principles which successfully explain phenomena in one field and apply them to those of another to which they are inapplicable. It was thus that the Pythagoreans thought that the laws of abstract number were adequate to explain the concrete facts of the physical world; the atomists that the hypothesis of indestructible, material atoms, was sufficient to explain all phenomena of life and thought. And though we have given over these attempts in their cruder forms, yet we are still liable, in our enthusiasm for a principle which we have victoriously applied in one field,

* "While the physical world is formed of an aggregate of energies which vary in form but not in quantity, the moral world, on the contrary, is, so to speak, in continual formation." G. Villa *Contemporary Psychology*, p. 360.

to overlook fundamental distinctions of subject-matter, and apply it in a field where it is altogether irrelevant or only relatively valid.* We are in continual danger of forgetting that the world does not consist of groups of facts all upon the same plane and explicable by the same axioms and definitions, but disposes them in an ascending series resembling rather a spiral column, from each new round of which we view the facts that lie before us from a higher point and at a different angle. In regard to ethics we may here so far anticipate as to state the view, hereafter to be proved, that it differs from the sciences that stand next below it, viz., biology and natural history, in that while these treat man as organically related to his environment in nature and society, ethics treats of him as conscious of that relation.

(3) Another distinction is important. It flows naturally from the two already mentioned. It has already been observed (p. 23) that the explanations of particular sciences are, after all, relative. No fact or phenomenon is fully explained till its relations to all the world beside are clearly known and defined. But "all the world beside," or the whole system of things, is not the subject-matter of any particular science. So far as it can be made a subject of investigation at all, it is the subject of

* As a prominent instance of this mistake at the present time we might take the tendency to apply the law of natural selection, as it is observed to operate in unconscious nature and among the lower animals, to the life of man as a conscious and intelligent member of a social system. Even H. Spencer is not altogether free from this error. A great deal of the antagonism to the scientific treatment of the moral life is probably due to attempts to explain its phenomena upon inadequate principles. See Book III., ch. iii. below.

philosophy or metaphysics. But while philosophy * alone deals with the question of ultimate explanations, yet relatively, and in their own field, the explanations of the particular sciences are regarded as valid. It might be said, for instance, that the truth of the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid is independent of the conclusions of philosophy as to the nature and reality of space, and no one would think it worth while seriously to question the statement that mathematics is independent of metaphysics. But the question may be and has been put with reference to ethics, Is it in like manner independent of philosophy? The older thinkers apparently were of opinion that it was not, as it was commonly spoken of as moral *philosophy*. Modern nomenclature and methods of treating it have emphasised its independence. Recent writers even go out of their way to disown all connection between ethics and metaphysics. But besides the general connection which there is between all the sciences which deal with some particular aspect of the world (*e.g.*, mathematics, which deals with space; dynamics, which deals with bodies in motion) and philosophy or metaphysics, which deals with the nature and reality of the world as a whole, there is in the case of ethics a more particular connection. This is manifest whether we take the point of view of the first or of the second of the distinctions already mentioned.

For (*a*) Ethics, we have seen, has to do with moral judgments, and these judgments are judgments of value

* Which, however, ought not to be thought of as opposed to the sciences, but only, to use Professor James's words, as "an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly" on their subject-matter.

—the value of conduct or character. Now, whatever they be in reality, they are apparently, at least, judgments of absolute, not merely of relative value; for it is usually thought and asserted that conduct is good or bad, not merely relatively, *i.e.*, according as we choose to regard a certain end desirable or not, but absolutely, *i.e.*, without relation to our individual views of what is desirable or not desirable in particular circumstances. This apparently is the meaning of duty and right as contrasted with pleasure or utility. In other words, morality is commonly thought to be required by the nature of things as a whole, not merely by the circumstances in which we happen to live. It is not necessary here to decide whether this opinion is true or false. Clearly if it is true there is a most intimate connection between ethics and metaphysics. And even if it be false it is difficult to see how its falsity can be proved without more or less overt reference to a philosophical doctrine of the place of man in the universe, and his relation to its central principle or purpose.

(*b*) This intimate connection with metaphysics may further be illustrated from the fact that in ethics we have to do, not only with man as related to his material and social environment, but with man as conscious of this relationship. For this consciousness, as may be easily shown, involves a reference to the whole world besides, as a cosmos or order in which he has a place. In being conscious of himself as a citizen of a particular state, or as a member of the human brotherhood, he is also conscious of himself as a citizen of the world, and as a member of a cosmos of related beings. And just as it is impossible to think of himself as a member of any lesser circle of relations, *e.g.*, of the family, without thinking of

himself as a member of a larger circle, *e.g.*, a society or state, so is it impossible to think of himself as a member of society without thinking of himself as a member of a universal or cosmic order. His thought of himself, under this latter aspect, overflows, as it were, into all his other thoughts about himself, transforming and moulding them in such a way that it is impossible to treat of any of the narrower forms of consciousness, *e.g.*, his family consciousness, without taking the wider into account. It is of course possible for the moment and for purposes of science to abstract one aspect or form of consciousness, such as the consciousness of ourselves as members of a particular society, from our consciousness of ourselves in general, just as it is possible to abstract a particular form or portion of space or of force from space or force in general. But when we come to analyse our social consciousness into its constituent elements, and ask, as we do in ethics, What are its nature and contents? we find that the answer depends upon our answer to the wider question, as to the nature and contents of consciousness as a whole, in a far more intimate way than does the question of the properties of the triangle or the electric current upon the question of the nature of space or force in general. Thus, to take a single instance, the science of mathematics will remain unaffected whether we believe with one school of metaphysicians that our knowledge of space is given from without, or with another that it is an *a priori* form contributed by the mind itself. But no one could say that our ethical analysis of that form of social consciousness which we call conscience will remain unaffected whether we believe with the Epicureans that the world is an accidental

concourse of atoms, or hold with the Stoics that it is the reflection of divine intelligence. We are thus led to the conclusion that, while the natural sciences may be said to be practically independent of metaphysics, the conclusions of philosophy as to the nature of the world at large and man's relation to it are of the utmost importance to ethics, and cannot be neglected in a complete exposition of its subject-matter.*

While this is so, it may be convenient and even necessary, in an elementary treatise like the present, to consider the subject-matter of ethics with as little reference as possible to the philosophical questions involved. Little harm can come of this course, so long as we know what we are about. It only comes to be misleading when we confuse the temporary convenience of neglecting these questions with the permanent possibility of doing so. To assert that we may for purposes of investigation abstract from metaphysical considerations is one thing; to assert their irrelevance to our ultimate results is quite another.†

§ 11. Ethics as a "Practical" Science.

Ethics has sometimes been distinguished from the natural sciences on the ground that it is practical while they are theoretic. On examination, however, the distinction is found to be a superficial one. It is true, indeed, that ethics stands nearer to our everyday life than does, for instance, astronomy or physiology. Its very name, as we have seen, implies this, and on this

* The precise point at which metaphysical questions press themselves upon our notice will be noted below. See pp. 237 and 251.

† On the relation of philosophy to science in general, see the *Logic of Hegel* (Wallace's Eng. Tr.), pp. 9-12; and *cp.* Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 41 foll.

ground it has sometimes been called practical philosophy. It is the science of conduct (πρᾶξις) and the judgments which more deeply effect it. Its conclusions may therefore be said to be of immediate and universal interest in a sense which cannot be claimed for the conclusions of the sciences just mentioned. But this does not carry us far. For it may easily be shown that as a science ethics is just as theoretic as astronomy or physiology, while, as furnishing the basis for the scientific practice of the arts, *e.g.*, of navigation and of healing, these sciences are just as practical as ethics.

The idea that there can be such a thing as a science which is purely theoretic comes from our habit of thinking of the natural sciences as systems of truth elaborated in books which are chiefly useful as a means of intellectual training. In the early stages of the history of science such a mistake was impossible. Man's interest in the laws of nature was then only the reflection of his interest in his own ends and purposes. Causes in nature were only interesting as means to practical ends.* It is true that there came a time when man began to develop that "disinterested curiosity" which is the condition of all higher achievement in science. Yet it is equally true that, just in proportion as scientific research becomes divorced from the practical interest that man has in the subjugation of nature, there is a danger that it may become pedantic or dilettante.†

* See Höffding's *Psychology*, p. 240 (Eng. Tr.).

† *E.g.*, Mr. Casaubon's Key to all Mythologies in *Middlemarch*. One cannot help sometimes a suspicion that much of the erudition of the present time, which, as Hegel once said, "finds most to be done where there is least to be got from it," is in the same condition. But here we are on a dangerous track. "Practice" is a large word. On the whole subject see Appendix C at end.

Even the most abstract and theoretic of all the sciences, viz., metaphysics or philosophy, while, as Novalis said, "it bakes no bread," may, as we have seen, become the most practical.

On the other hand, the notion that ethics is less theoretic than any other science can only come from the tendency, already remarked upon, to confuse theory with practice in the field of conduct—ideas and judgments *about* morality in the study or in the class-room with moral ideas and moral judgments in the concrete circumstances of daily life.

§ 12. Has Ethics to do with what Ought to be rather than with what Is?

Closely allied with the views just criticised is another that is not less misleading. Ethics, it is said, differs from the natural sciences in that, while they deal with things as they *are*, ethics deals with them as they ought to be. This distinction, it is maintained, is based upon the fundamental antithesis between natural and moral law. The former is the law of what is, the latter of what is to be. The law of gravitation is a statement of the actual relation between the pen I hold in my hand and the earth which attracts it. On the other hand, the law that I shall be perfectly sincere in the opinions I express by my writing is a statement of what ought to be my relation to my reader, whatever the actual fact may be.

To all this it may be replied that the distinction is true enough, but it only brings us back to the point, by this time sufficiently obvious, that in the one

case the emphasis is on a standard of life, in the other on a law of physical causation. To press the distinction into a complete separation between the "is" and the "ought"—fact and standard or criterion of fact—can lead only to confusion. The truth is that what is called a natural law is itself not so much a statement of fact as of a standard or type to which facts have been found more or less to approximate. This is true even in inorganic nature, whose laws are coming to be conceived of by physicists themselves rather as a statement of averages or working hypotheses than as anything verifiable of individual entities.* In physiology and biology it is obvious that we are dealing not merely with things as they are, but with normal or standard types of adaptation exemplified in particular organs and organisms, *i.e.*, not merely with what things are, but with what they ought to be. This may be otherwise stated by saying that in all science there is a reference to a system or whole which makes definite demands upon its parts, setting rules and limits to their form and action. The difference between the sciences consists in the difference in the nature of the wholes to which reference is made, and therefore in the implications of the "oughts" requiring conformity to it. What differentiates ethics from other sciences is not that it sits looser to the "is," but that since the whole or type is, as we shall see, nothing less than human nature itself, the *"ought" is not only one that comes with all the weight of the implied reality, but one that can be recognised by the individual himself and can therefore come to him as a self-imposed obligation.*

* See, *e.g.*, Poincaré's *Science and Hypothesis*, Part IV

§ 13. Ethics and Politics.

It remains to distinguish ethics from two sciences with which it may seem to have been confused, when we spoke of the former as having to do with man as a member of society. The connection between ethics and politics * is obvious. They both deal with human conduct and character. They both treat of these in connection with the end of human good, and therefore as the subject of moral judgment. They both conceive of them as at once determined by and determining social relations. The difference corresponds to that which exists between law and morals. While Law has to do with conduct in its *external consequences*, or if it goes deeper merely takes account of *intention*, Morality takes account of the *inward motive* and disposition as well as the outward effect,—the conduct of the understanding and the imagination as well as conduct as it immediately affects other persons. It says not only "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," but "Think no evil," "Flee vain and foolish imaginations." Political enactment can maintain property, the currency, the family, public education; it cannot secure that the citizens shall use these institutions in the spirit and for the purpose for which they were intended,—a truth

* The hybrid term, "Sociology," seems likely to assert a place for itself beside the older Politics or Political Philosophy. I understand the word as meaning the theory of society in general, including its origin and growth, whereas politics is the theory of civilised society organised as a state for the fulfilment of an end latent in human nature. See B. Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*, c. ii. On the parallel distinction between Society and State, see D. G. Ritchie's *Principles of State Interference*, Appendix

which is expressed in the common saying that you cannot make men moral by act of parliament. The justification for legislation which apparently has this aim —*e.g.*, the regulation or suppression of public-houses—is not that by means of it we may make certain persons conform to moral demands, *e.g.*, abstain from intoxicating liquor, but that we may improve the conditions, *e.g.*, for the neighbours or the children of the toper, and remove temptation out of his own way. The man who abstains merely because owing to the state of the law he cannot get liquor is obviously not moral.* We may say, therefore, that ethics, starting from the inner side, concerns itself with the form under which we must conceive of human good the fundamental needs, and, therefore, rights of human nature; politics, starting from the outer side, considers forms of social organisation, legal enactments, and distribution of civic rights as the essential conditions under which individuals at once appropriate what is good and communicate it to others. It is in this sense that ethics may be said to precede politics. Only after we have arrived at a clear conception of the inward nature of what is good can we hope to

* A story is related of Connop Thirlwall, who on one occasion became involved in a discussion with the late Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, when the latter was residing at Trinity College, Cambridge, about the retention of enforced attendance at chapel. "It is a choice," said the Bishop, "between compulsory religion and no religion at all." "The distinction," replied Thirlwall, "is too subtle for my mental grasp." The same might be said of compulsory morality: it is equivalent to no morality at all. On the general subject of the relation between Law and Morality, see Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I, ch. ii.; also *Elements of Politics*, ch. xiii.; and on the apparent *permanency* of the legal as compared with the moral code, Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

settle the question as to its proper external conditions. The foundation of a true criticism of political institutions must be laid in a true criticism of human life as subject to a supreme law or purpose, *i.e.*, in ethics.

§ 14. Ethics and Economics.

In view of the prominence in our own time of the social problem, it is even more practically important to realise the relation between ethics as the science of good and the science which is concerned with "goods" in the secondary sense of the means for the satisfaction of human need so far as they are regarded as exchangeable commodities. As in respect to politics, the difficulty has been to draw any clear line of distinction between it and ethics, the difficulty with regard to economics has been to bring it into connection with ethical principles. At the first rise of the science of political economy the creation, distribution, and consumption of wealth seemed to fall under laws of their own, which, like those of the material world, had merely to be understood and submitted to. It was not till the practical consequences of this fatal assumption began to manifest themselves in the condition of the people that the essential difference between them, corresponding to the distinction between the rigidity and uniformity of material forces and the pliancy of human desires and interests, came to be recognised by theorists. In what sense in view of this difference it is possible to speak of economic laws at all is a question for the economist to decide. What has become clear is that, granting the pliancy of desire, the conditions under which men, women,

and children earn their living, and again, the system under which the products of industry are distributed, have far too important bearings on the formation of character and on general social welfare to be left to the uncontrolled play of the lower forces in human nature. This being so, we must henceforth regard with suspicion any attempt to separate the study of the conditions of the production of wealth from the study of the ideal of life which alone gives value to wealth.

Note.

Although I have followed in the text of the above section the distinction suggested by language itself between moral and political science, I may be permitted here to suggest that the recognised mode of treating them apart from one another is the result of temporary circumstances, and may be very misleading. It is at any rate significant that the greatest thinkers have either refused them separate treatment, or placed them in the closest connection with one another. Thus Plato's *Republic* is as much a treatise on moral as on political philosophy in the modern sense of the word; Aristotle's *Ethics* is to be taken, as he insists, only as introductory to his *Politics*; in modern philosophy it has been frequently noted that Hegel, the most encyclopædic of philosophers, has no place for ethics apart from the analysis of society which he gives us in the *Philosophy of Right*. The truth seems to be, that modern intuitionalism and modern hedonism (both, it is to be observed, forms of individualism and of English growth) are responsible for the present fashion of treating ethical questions in abstraction from their political correlatives. Finding as they do the principle of moral obligation in the individual mind, whether as the seat of "innate ideas" or the percipient of pain and pleasure, they have assigned to ethics, as its chief subject, the discussion of such questions as the nature of conscience and the freedom of the will. But it is every day becoming clearer that it is a mistake to look to what is purely individual in man as the ground of his moral judgments or the source of his prevailing motives, or even to conceive of the individual in any way as arbitrarily selecting the principles which

are to guide his conduct. The motives under the influence of which each of us habitually lives are much more accurately represented by that mysterious confluence of impulses which we call the spirit of the age, and which, as consisting of elements borrowed from the present constitution of society, current ideas upon rights of person and property, and the prevailing conceptions of the end or purpose of social effort, it is the duty of social or political philosophy to analyse. When this is more generally acknowledged, it may be anticipated that the distinction in the text will again pass into the background, psychological questions will occupy a smaller, sociological and political a larger and more central place in ethical discussion.

BOOK II

MORAL JUDGMENT

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT OF MORAL JUDGMENT.

§ 15. What is Conduct?

We have seen that ethics has to do with conduct and character, and that it differs from a physical or experimental treatment of the phenomena of human action in that its subject-matter is a form of judgment upon them. Before proceeding further we must borrow from psychology some clearer idea of what is meant by the terms of our definition with a view to understanding what it is we judge.

It seems natural to define conduct as "willed action," in contradistinction to reflex, instinctive and all forms of involuntary action.* But until we have defined what we mean by will, this definition leaves us very much where we were. Apart from that there is the twofold difficulty that some forms of involuntary action are subject to moral approval and condemnation, while some forms of voluntary action seem to escape it.†

* On the distinction between reflex action, instinct and volition see Höffding, *Psychology*, Eng. Tr., ch. vii., and for a full discussion of the "instinctive germs of volition," Bain's *Senses and Intellect*, pp. 246 foll. Cp. Ward's art. in *Ency. Brit.* on "Psychology," p. 73.

† On the distinction here drawn between conduct and action, see Lotze's *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 23 foll.

Starting from the easier question, we may note that :—

(1) We pass moral judgments on habitual actions however apparently involuntary and irresistible they may be. How is this to be explained if moral predicates attach only to conduct, and conduct is always voluntary action? The answer is, that habits are dispositions to act in a particular way, which having been formed in the first instance by repeated acts of will are epitomised volitions. So that, while we may not be said to be responsible for the habitual act as an isolated event, seeing that it is involuntary, nevertheless we may be responsible for it as an instance of a habit which has been voluntarily acquired, and which we might have checked before it became inveterate.* In other words, what we really judge in such a case is the series of voluntary acts whereby the habit has become irresistible.

(2) Contrariwise, if conduct and voluntary action are to be taken as equivalent terms, the difficulty might be raised that many actions are clearly seen to be voluntary, and yet are not commonly reckoned as conduct or made the subject of moral judgment. Thus it is thought that while the artisan is at his work, though all his acts may be strictly voluntary, yet they are not conduct: conduct (that in virtue of which we apply moral attributes to him) only begins when he lays down his tools. We do indeed blame him for being dilatory or careless in his work, but this is thought to be on the ground of his breaking his contract with his employer, not on the ground of the work itself. Similarly, in the higher fields of the artist and the scientific reasoner or experimentalist, we do not generally

* See Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book III., ch. v., where this point is raised, and once for all solved in the above sense.

think of their labour as conduct. The distinction, however, here urged is entirely arbitrary, and cannot bear investigation. The conduct of the hand and eye and intellect in daily work is as much moral conduct as the voluntary dealings with ourselves and others outside that work. An artisan or an artist or a writer who does not "do his best" is not only an inferior workman, but a bad man.* Conduct then embraces not merely a section of man's voluntary life; it is not "three-fourths of life," as Matthew Arnold said of it, or any other vulgar fraction of it, but the whole of life so far as it is human life at all.

§ 16. What is Will?

We have still to ask What do we mean by will or volition? It is impossible here to go into detail on so large a subject. Our aim must be to bring out broadly one or two of the main facts that are necessary for the right understanding of what follows. If the psychologist complains that I am giving diagrams of a few sections I shall not deny it. I trust him to fill out the picture.

Starting from an example: it will be agreed that for me to decide to stop writing and go for a walk to warm myself is a voluntary act. What does this involve? (1) It clearly involves a feeling of pain arising from the sensation of being cold. *Feeling* is an element in all conscious action. The feeling of pleasure or pain, excitement or depression is involved even in the most unemotional actions, as in the investigation of a scientific problem.

* Carlyle once said of a joiner who was doing a job in his house in Chelsea that he "broke the whole decalogue with every stroke of his hammer." On the whole subject see Appendix C at end.

If there were no element of feeling, of pleasure in the thought of the acquisition of knowledge or of pain in the thought of being without it, *i.e.*, unless we had an *interest* in it, the activity itself would be impossible. In the case chosen for illustration it is obvious enough that there is an element of feeling, and that on the supposition that the action we have under analysis is voluntary this feeling makes itself felt distinctly as mine. It involves the incipient judgment, "I feel cold." In proportion as this is realised my state is recognised as different from the state of the cat which at the same moment may show signs of moving to the fire. (2) There is *desire* of the warmth of the walk. It is important to note the new elements that are here introduced. (*a*) There is the idea of the exercise and the heat which is to be the result of it accruing to myself. (*b*) Side by side, and contrasted with this, there is the idea of my present coldness, the contrast producing a heightened state of feeling curiously compounded of the pain of the present state and the pleasure or interest in the idea of the warmth. (*c*) But if these two were all,—if the rise of the idea of the warmth were immediately followed by its enjoyment, as putting on the wishing-cap in the story means possession of the thing wished for,—there would be no such thing as desire or will. It is the fact that there is resistance to be overcome, something to be done, that is the condition of both. Desire is a state of tension created by the contrast between the present state of the self and the idea of a future state not yet realised. But desire is not will, as may be seen from the fact that there may be a conflict of desires in the mind, as, in our illustration, the conflict between the desire of getting on with my

work and the desire of getting up and going for a walk. (3) This is the stage of *deliberation*,* in which the mind weighs, as in a balance, two or more mutually exclusive objects of desire, or rather itself sways between them. Finally (4) there is the acceptance of one, the abandonment of the other, constituting the stage which we call the "*act of choice*," "decision," or "resolution," the essence of which is that I identify myself in anticipation with a particular object and with the particular line of action required to realise it. It may be, however, that the actual realisation is deferred to a future time, *e.g.*, till I have finished the work on hand. In this case I am said to have made a resolution, which means that the idea is, as it were, hung up meantime in a state of suspended animation, to be called into life again and the volition completed by the final "fiat" when the proper moment shall arrive. It is true we pass moral judgments upon resolutions,† but they are only provisional. A man is not good because he makes good resolutions, nor bad because he makes bad ones. It is only when the resolution passes into conduct that it justly becomes the object of a moral judgment. ‡

* With reference to the object or end. At a later stage, after the resolution has been taken, there may be a subsidiary process of deliberation as to means. I do not wish to be understood as implying that deliberation or even desire are definitely recognisable elements in all actions we call voluntary. I think the elements of them are always there.

† And even on desires. See Matthew's Gospel, v. 28.

‡ How far the resolution is from the completed act has become a proverb in respect to *good* resolutions, but they ought to be only provisional. Would some charitable person invent a converse proverb for bad resolutions? Höffding (*Psychology*, Eng. ed., p. 342) quotes the case of a woman who, having got into a neighbour's garden for the purpose of setting fire to her house, and been taken

§ 17. Relation of Desire to Will and Character.

The chief difficulty in considering an act of will does not, however, attach to the analysis of it into its elements, but to the question of the manner in which we are to conceive of these elements as related to one another in the concrete act.

Thus it is a common mistake to think of a desire in abstraction from the self. We speak of our "having desires," "following our desires," "controlling our desires," etc., as though they were something separate from ourselves, acting upon us from without, or controlled by us as an unruly horse is by its rider.* This conception of the relation between will and desire is at

almost in the act, swore solemnly in court that she knew she would not have perpetrated the act, but hesitated to state upon oath that she had abandoned her intention when she was surprised. With this we may compare the passage in Mark Rutherford's story of *Miriam's Schooling*, where, speaking of Miriam's temptation to take her own life, he says: "Afterwards the thought that she had been close to suicide was for months a new terror to her. She was unaware that *the distance between us and dreadful crimes is much greater often than it appears to be*." On the other hand, the mere wish for a result (*e.g.*, Tito Melema's wish for his father's death in *Romola*) may contain already in itself, all unknown to the conceiver of it, the fully formed resolution and the act as well. The occasion only is wanting for the wish and the deed to spring together. On the nature of will in general see W. James's *Principles of Psychology*, ch. xxvi. of will and desire; Ward's *loc. cit.*; Green's *Proleg. to Ethics*, Book II., ch. ii.; Dewey's *Psychology*, pp. 360 foll.; Bradley in *Mind*, N. S., Nos. 43, 46, 49; *Appearance and Reality*, p. 463 n.; Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 250 foll.; my own art., "Ethics," in Hastings' *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*.

* See Plato's well-known simile of the charioteer and the horses, *Phædrus*, § 253.

the basis of the anti-libertarian doctrine, that conduct is at all times determined by the strongest desire, *i.e.* (since desire is a force outside and independent of the will), by something other than the self. The conception, however, is itself inaccurate. It is forgotten that desires are always for objects, and that these objects are always relative to a self for whom they have value. It is owing to their having a value for self that they become "objects of desire," whose character, even whose existence, may be said to be dependent upon the character of the self to whom they "appeal." Thus it is an object of desire to the reader to apprehend this section on the nature of conduct, but it is so in virtue of his intellectual and moral needs, acquirements, and capacities. In other words, the desire depends upon, and is organically related to, the character of the person who desires to understand this book. This section has a significance and an attraction for him which it does not possess for the man in the street, precisely in virtue of the difference of their respective characters. His character reflects itself in the object of his desire; he thinks he sees, in the idea of himself as having read the book, a more desirable self than his present self: whereas to the man in the street the sight of the book and the paragraph gives back no such reflection, and awakens, consequently, no such desire.

These considerations bring out several points which are of the utmost importance in the theory of desire. First, human desires are not mere irrational forces or tendencies propelling a man this way and that way. They are always for objects more or less definitely conceived. As such they are to be distinguished from

mere appetites or propensities which are shared by the lower animals. Secondly, these objects are related to a self, and that in two ways. (*a*) They are organically related, as just explained, to *self-formed character*. So far from being the creature of desire, each man may be said to create his own desires, in the sense that, as he himself changes by development of his intellectual and moral powers, he changes the character of the objects which interest him or which he desires. (*b*) They are related to the self, in that it is the realisation of them *for a self* that is desired. Hence it is indifferent whether we say, *e.g.*, I desire that object, or I desire the fulfilment of myself in that object; I desire to read this book, or I desire to fulfil myself by reading this book. The essential point to note is that all desire, and therefore all will (in so far as will depends upon desire), carries with it a reference to self. Its object is a form of self-fulfilment.* Thirdly, as we shall see, there are different selves corresponding to the different interests or social groups with which a man may identify himself—the search for truth, the victory of a party, the well-being of a class. Round these his desires tend to group themselves, forming what has happily been called a world or "universe" of desires, which tends to occupy him at a particular time, as a "subject" may occupy the logical intelligence, and to determine his thought and action indirectly, through one or other of the particular desires which are assimilated to it. These universes may co-operate with and support one another, as when a man's philanthropy and his political ambition unite as motives to found a hospital; or may enter into conflict,

* *Cp.* Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 62, "In desire what is desired must in all cases be self."

as when a man's interest as a brewer or a landlord conflicts with his loyalty to his church or his party.*

§ 18. Will and Self.

The mistake of conceiving of will and desire as controlling or controlled from without is analogous to the more fundamental one of conceiving of the will and the self as externally related to one another. As the former may be said to be the characteristic fallacy of those who oppose the common doctrine of the freedom of the will, the latter may be said to be the characteristic mistake of those who support it. † The latter often speak as though the self had, among its other faculties, also a will, which was free in the sense of being able to act independently of desire, and of the character which, as we have seen, reflects itself in desire. If what we have already said be true, we shall suspect this view, on the ground that, as we have already seen, will is dependent on desire, and all desire is related to self and character. Will is not something *possessed by* the self. The will *is* the self. It is the self apprehended as consciously moving towards the realisation of an object of interest. Will thus differs from

* See on this aspect of desire Professor Mackenzie's excellent statement in *Manual of Ethics*, p. 76 foll.

† It is not possible, perhaps not desirable, to enter, in a text-book like the present, into a full discussion of the vexed and difficult question of the freedom of the will. The above remarks are rather warnings against initial errors in approaching the subject than a detailed solution of its difficulties. For a critical discussion of the points at issue between Libertarians and Determinists, see Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., ch. v.; and for development of a view similar to that in the text, Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book II., ch. ii.; Works, Vol. II., pp. 308 foll. See also Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, ch. viii.; H. Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, ch. iii.

conduct as the inward does from the outward aspect of the same fact. Looked at from the inside, the fact apprehended is that of a self seeking to express itself in realisation of a purpose; looked at from the outside, it is conduct. Hence it will be indifferent whether we say that moral judgments attach to conduct or to the will (or self) that realises itself in conduct.

§ 19. Conduct and Character.

In defining the subject-matter of ethics, we said that it was conduct and character; but hitherto we have not been in a position to set these two in their proper relations to one another. We have now, however, reached a point of view from which we may criticise the common ideas of that relationship. For these ideas are founded upon an error similar to those which we have just been criticising. They assume that the will, of which conduct, as we have just seen, is only the outer side, stands to the character in a merely external relation; the only difference being that, while by some it is conceived of as determined by it as by a natural cause (*e.g.*, as the motion of the billiard ball is determined by the cue), by others the will is conceived of as capable of acting in an independent line of its own, without relation to character. It will help us to steer our way between the rocks and shoals of this controversy, which will be recognised by the student as that between Necessarianism and Libertarianism, if we keep clearly before us two distinctions often overlooked.

In the first place, there is the distinction between the so-called natural tendencies and inherited characteristics, such as quick temper or indolent disposition,

which are the raw material of moral training, and these same as moulded and systematised by will and intelligence in that peculiar mode which we call character. The former, as isolated elements of character, may in a sense be said to be "given," and to be independent of will; though, as a matter of fact, they never come before us in a being whose conduct may be made the object of moral judgment, except in a form which they owe to the reaction of will and intelligence upon them. Character, on the other hand, is the acquired habit of regulating these tendencies in a certain manner, in relation to consciously conceived ends. In other words, character is not something separate from will and acting upon it from without, but is the habitual mode in which will regulates that system of impulses and desires which, looked at subjectively, is the field of its exercise.*

Secondly, there is the distinction between character as relatively fixed and static, as the result of action, and character as something that grows and changes from moment to moment just through action.

In its former aspect volition must be conceived of as determined by character; the individual act must be taken as the expression or embodiment of character. If it be not so taken it is difficult to see in what sense we can speak in ordinary language of a man as responsible or accountable for his actions. The theoretic justification of moral responsibility is the presumption that a man's voluntary actions may be taken as an index to the moral qualities of the man himself. Any other

* Hence character has been defined as a "habit of will." J. S. Mill calls character "a completely fashioned will." It is of course never completely fashioned. For a discussion of this see Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, Essay I., Note B.

hypothesis as to the relation between character and conduct—whether it be that of the determinist, who supposes actions to flow from previous conditions, as physical effects follow upon their causes, or that of the libertarian, who isolates the will from character as a mysterious power of unmotived choice—is incompatible with human responsibility. On the former hypothesis a human action is only one of a series of natural events, for which it would be as absurd to hold the agent accountable as it would be to hold the sun accountable for heat or the clouds for rain. On the latter supposition acts of choice are traced to an abstract force or entity, conceived of as without organic relation to the concrete self or personality who alone can be the subject of moral censure or approval.*

On the other hand, looked at as in process of formation or growth, character must be conceived of as determined by volition. As already pointed out,† our habits of conduct are the result of an indefinite multitude of past actions, which in the first instance were voluntary. If any one objects to this account, whereby he is asked to conceive of character as at once determining and determined by the will, we shall best answer by pointing out that this apparent contradiction is not peculiar to the relation of character and the individual act: it is simply a law of growth generally. The life of a plant furnishes us with an analogous instance. At any moment of its growth the plant is determined by its previous state; while, on the other hand, the new shoot (which corresponds to the volitional

* On the subject of responsibility, see Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 333 foll.; Bradley, *op. cit.*, Essay I; Dewey, *Outlines of Ethics*, p. 160.

† § 15 and n.

act) reacts upon and changes, or, in other words, determines the future growth of the parent plant. We must, however, remember that, while in the plant the determining and the determined are unconscious of themselves as such, man (and herein lies his freedom) is conscious of himself as at once determining and determined by his character. He can put himself above everything, himself included.

§ 20. Do we Judge an Act by its Motives or its Consequences?

There still remains a serious difficulty in connection with the above account of the object of moral judgment. The object of moral judgment, it has been said, is conduct; but conduct, according to our definition, has two aspects: it is will, and it is action; it involves an internal and an external factor. On the one hand, as will it involves feeling and desire, which again involves the idea of an object. On the other hand, actions obviously involve consequences: in action the will goes, so to speak, out of itself, implicates itself in an external world, and in realising its object produce an *effect*. Hence the question rises, Which of these factors is the important one? Is conduct judged to be good or bad in respect of the feelings and desires involved in the volition, or in respect to the consequences which are involved in the action? The controversy has become historic, some philosophers maintaining that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends upon the *motive*, others that it depends upon the *consequences*. If motives are good or bad, says Bentham, "it is only on account of their effects." Similarly, J. S. Mill asserts, "The motive has nothing to

do with the morality of the act."* On the other hand Butler maintains that "the rightness or wrongness of an act depends very much upon the motive for which it is done"; † and Kant, more emphatically still, that "the effect of our actions cannot give them moral worth." ‡

Much of the difficulty here turns on the ambiguity of the word motive, upon which, in its relation to conduct, we are now in a position to throw some light.

§ 21. Meaning of Motive.

(1) We sometimes think and speak of motive as though it were a *feeling*, and it is quite certain that there is no voluntary action which is not preceded by feeling. Putting aside the element of pain involved in all desire, and through it in volition, it is clear that the pleasure-seeker must have a feeling of pleasure in the thought of a future pleasure before he can be moved to pursue it. Similarly the benevolent man must feel pleasure in the thought of other people's happiness, the scientific man in the thought of the truth to be discovered, before the will of either can be set in motion. But it is no less clear that this feeling cannot by itself be the motive of an action. For whatever else a motive is, it is agreed by all that it implies an end or aim representing something that is to be realised, *e.g.*, a future pleasure to ourselves, a good to others, or a truth to be discovered, and not merely something that is already realised, as is the feeling

* Though it has much to do with our estimate of the agent. See *Utilitarianism*, ch. ii.; *Autobiography*, ch. ii. (pp. 50 foll.).

† See Butler's *Dissertations* II. (Bell, p. 336); *Theory of Ethics*, (Abbott,) p. 16.

‡ For an early and acute discussion of this problem in its modern form, see Godwin's *Political Justice*, Bk. II, ch. iv.

in question. This may be otherwise expressed by saying that, while feeling as an element in desire may be said to be the efficient cause of action, a motive is generally admitted to imply a reference to a final cause.

(2) While the motive cannot be the feeling alone, neither can it be the thought or idea of the object alone. The presence of an idea to consciousness is indeed, we are now agreed, the central fact in all volition which is first thought-permeated action. But as Aristotle long ago perceived, thought itself cannot move to action.* True, modern psychology has found the type of all volition in so-called ideo-motor action, which seems to be just action determined by the idea of something which is *not* desired. But even in cases where the bare idea seems to be the active principle, as in hypnotic suggestion and obsessions, it is necessary that the idea should be in harmony, or at least not in conflict, with the natural or acquired impulses or tendencies. *A fortiori* in voluntary action proper, what gives motive power to an idea is not its mere presence in the mind, but its congruence with some preformed disposition or "universe of desire." As this congruence manifests itself in feeling, we may sum up by defining a motive as the idea which, through felt congruence with some element in the self, has taken possession of the will and been realised in action.

§ 22. Motive and Intention.

Further to clear the ground of preliminary difficulties which beset the question of the relation of motive and

* *Διάνοια αὐτὴ οὐθὲν κινεῖ ἀλλ' ἡ ἕνεκα τοῦ καὶ πρακτική*, *Eth.* vi., 285 ; *i.e.*, as Grant says, thought *plus* desire.

consequent to each other and to moral judgment, it is useful to distinguish between motive and intention. Bentham formulated this distinction by defining motive as that for the sake of which an action is done; whereas the intention includes both that for the sake of which, and that in spite of which, anything is done. Intention is thus wider than motive. The former may be said to include the latter, but not *vice versa*. For while the end or consequent for the sake of which the action is done is, of course, intended, it is only part of the intention, and is sometimes distinguished from the other part as the "ultimate intention." On the other hand, the consequences of the intermediate steps or the means adopted, though part of the intention, are not part of the motive. Thus the father who punishes his child is said to intend the child's good. The good of the child is the motive. But he also intends to cause the child pain; the pain, however, though it is part of the intention, cannot in any sense be called the motive or reason why he punished him. Or take the case of the man who sells his coat to buy a loaf of bread. His motive is to buy the bread. It is also part of his intention to do so. It is part of his intention also to part with his coat, but this cannot in any intelligible sense be said to be the motive of his conduct.

§ 23. Bearing of Results on Questions between Motive and Consequent.

If we now revert to the question with which we started we perceive that the antithesis upon which the controversy turns is in reality a false one. Motive and consequent are not really opposed to one another in the manner supposed. The motive is the ultimate

consequent as apprehended and desired. It is accordingly indifferent whether we say that the motive or the consequent is the object of moral judgment, so long as we understand what we are speaking about. Thus we may say that an act is good because the motive is good; but we shall be careful to note that by motive we mean, not a mere feeling, but the end with which the will identifies itself in the action, and by so doing reveals its character. On the other hand, we may say that it is the consequences which give moral character to the act; but again we shall be careful to note that this is true only if by consequences we mean, first, consequences as preconceived, *i.e.*, as intended, and, secondly, those of the intended consequences for the sake of which the act is done, *i.e.*, the idea of which is the final cause of the act. A man cannot be held responsible for consequences which he did not foresee, except in so far as he is responsible for not foreseeing them. Nor is he to be judged good or bad on the ground of that part of the consequences which was his intention merely and not his motive. So judged, the tyrannicide for the cause of freedom would be condemned, the tyrant who saved a victim from drowning to burn him at the stake would be justified. Only when we have taken into account the act as a whole, and answered the questions, (1) whether the consequences as foreseen are good or bad; (2) whether these consequences were the end aimed at, have we a right to found our moral judgments upon them.

It thus appears that Bentham and Mill are substantially right in the above contention. The apparent difference between their doctrine and our own depends on a difference of terminology. After making a distinction between

motive and intention,* Mill goes on to maintain that, while the motive has nothing to do with the morality of an action, the intention certainly has. But, on looking closer, we find that what he means by intention is "what the agent *wills to do*," which, taken in the narrower sense of the ultimate intention explained, is precisely what we have seen to be the proper meaning of motive. From this he distinguishes motive as "the feeling which makes him will so to do," which is precisely what we have said motive ought not to mean; for the feeling, as feeling, has no moral quality whatsoever. Mill's opponents (*e.g.* Martineau†) use the words in the same sense as he does, and are certainly wrong in maintaining that the motive conceived of as a feeling or affection is that which is primarily the object of moral judgment.‡

§ 24. Will and Motive.

As a further consequence of our definition of motive it will be seen that what was said in a previous section on the relation between will and desire applies, *mutatis*

* *Utilitarianism*, ch. ii., n.

† See *Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 274. One of the instances given of a feeling which is unconditionally bad is malevolence. But malevolence is more than a feeling. As the word indicates, it is a "*desire* of evil" to another. The same is true of kindness and charity, which are sometimes thought to be feelings which are unconditionally good. There is such a thing as mistaken kindness, and we have learned to our cost that charity may be misdirected, and in a literal sense cover a multitude of sins.

‡ For a classical statement of the true relation of motive and consequent—the inward and the outward in conduct—see *Logic of Hegel*, Wallace's Eng. Tr., pp. 219-221; and for the further discussion of the question raised in the text, and of other difficulties that rise out of it, Green, *op. cit.*, Book IV., ch. i., init.; Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-46; Note at end of the chapter

mutandis, to the relation between will and motive. Since motive is the idea of the wider object desired, and since the object desired depends upon the character of the self that desires, the same may be said of the motive. This is sometimes expressed by saying that a man "constitutes" his own motive. And this is true in the sense that the motive is not to be conceived of as external to the will, or as something that acts upon or appeals to it from without. The mind and will of a man are already expressed in his motives, so that in being determined by them he is in strict sense determined by himself. Hence we may pass from judgment on a man's motive to judgment upon his character. In judging a man's motive to be bad, we pass condemnation on the character or habit of will for being such that this could be a motive to it.

§ 25. Summary.

Returning from the discussion of these difficulties, we may sum up the conclusions arrived at in this chapter, so far as they are important for our main investigation. *The object of moral judgment is conduct, i.e., voluntary action.* The volition, or act of will, which is the distinctive mark of conduct, may be defined as the movement of the self towards the realisation of an object, conceived of as fulfilling a need, as well-being or as good. *Judgment on conduct may therefore, with equal justice, be said to be judgment upon will, or upon the self which is expressed in the act of will.* As, moreover, character, properly understood, is simply the general habit of will determining it in its particular actions, *moral judgments attach with equal propriety to character.* Finally, the

motive of an action is not, as commonly supposed, the feeling (which, though undoubtedly present in every act of will, has as feeling no moral quality), but the idea of the object in which the self is moved to look for its fulfilment. Hence, as organically related to the self (being, in fact, only a possible motive to a self of such and such a character), *the motive is also with justice regarded as the proper object of Moral Judgment.*

NOTE.

From the doctrine in the text it follows that it is impossible for one who has done wrong to shelter himself under the excuse of general benevolence, good intentions, or well meaning. Feelings and ideas are only of value as they express themselves in action, and right action is a matter of fine adjustment of means to end: "the right thing, at the right time, in the right way." Habitual want of success in carrying out good intentions we properly regard as the sign of the moral defect we call folly, as habitual success is the sign of the moral virtue we call wisdom. But in the search for lucidity on this subject I have raised a difficulty, the neglect to notice which in a former edition has led to misunderstanding in some quarters. I have maintained the distinction between motive and intention in opposition to some writers of authority, among them Professor Dewey. This, and the example of the tyrannicide I have used on p. 63, might seem to imply the doctrine that the end justifies the means. Let but a man's motive be good, any act of fanaticism would seem to find its justification. The difficulty is, I believe, in principle met by recalling the truth that the moral world is one, and that it is impossible in actual fact to draw any hard and fast line between effects that are means and effects that are ends. The motive itself, in the sense I have given to the word, is only part of a larger end; freedom from tyranny is only of value as a means to a general form of national life. Hence it may very well be that the means to the more immediate object are in contradiction to the wider end: an assassination from good motives may very well inflict a wound on the very form of civil order which the assassin seeks to promote. It is this truth that is maintained in Professor Dewey's doctrine of

the "Concrete Identity of Motive and Intention."* While the principle thus seems clear, the treatment of such cases may in practice be surrounded with doubts and difficulties which ought to serve to remind us of the imperfections of our present stage of civilisation. There ought to be no assassins, but there ought also to be no cause for them.

* *Ethics*, p. 248.

CHAPTER II.

THE STANDARD OF MORAL JUDGMENT—MORAL LAW.

§ 26. The Two General Forms of Moral Judgment.

If, in seeking for the standard of moral judgment, we start with an analysis of the form, we perceive at once that this is twofold. On the one hand we speak of conduct as "right" or "wrong," and on the other as "good" or "bad." And these two forms seem to imply different standards. Looked at from the side of its etymology, right is connected with Lat. *rectus* = "straight" or "according to *rule*." * Similarly the word in Greek most nearly corresponding to right, δίκη (dikê), with the adj. δίκαιος (dikaios) and the adv. δίκην (dikên =in early Greek simply "according to rule"), is connected with the root *dic*, to point or direct.† On the other hand, good, Germ. *gut*, is connected with the root *gath*, found in Gr. ἀγαθός (agathos), and meaning serviceable or valuable for an *end*.‡

* *Cp. ius* and *iubeo*, from *yu* (the root also of ζεύγνυμι and *iugum*), to bind; *fas*, from *fari*, to speak or announce.

† *Cp.* Germ. *schlimm* (crooked), and its original opposite, *schlecht*, as in the phrase *Schlecht und recht*.

‡ *Cp.* Lat. *frugi*. In this and the following paragraph I am indebted to Wundt's suggestive chapter on Language and Ethical Ideas in *Ethics*, ch. i.

Similarly we have a circle of words referring to the phenomena of the moral life, and bearing obvious affinity to one or other of these fundamental ideas. On the one hand we have the vocabulary of right: *e.g.*, "duty," that which is owed or which we are bound to do; "obligation," that which binds us; "ought" or owed; "responsibility," or answerableness as before a legal tribunal, etc. On the other hand we have the vocabulary of goodness or fitness for an end: *e.g.*, in "virtue," the quality of fitness in a *man*, corresponding to Gr. ἀρετή (aretê), from root *ar*, found in ἀραρίσκω (ararisco), to fit or join together; Germ. *Tugend* (from *taugen*, to be fit); *fromm* (from *frommen*, to be of use), and our own "worthy."

§ 27. Which of these is Prior?

There thus seem to be two standards, or at any rate two different ways of conceiving of the same standard, that of a law and that of an end. The question, Which of these is prior? is a fundamental one in ethics.

It is not too much to say that the answer which different ethical theories have given to it forms the main line of distinction between them. On the one hand there are theories which, like that of Kant and Butler, start from the assumption of the priority of the conception of right. This seems to find support in the familiar fact that both to nations and individuals morality first presents itself as a form of restraint upon natural inclinations imposed by some higher will, whether human or divine. It is thus that to the Jew filial piety, like the observance of the Sabbath, appeared as part of the written statutes of the Lord, to the Greek as part of the unwritten law of Zeus, while probably to

the vast majority of the inhabitants of civilised countries at the present day its obligatoriness depends on the authority of some social or religious tradition unconnected with its inherent beauty or value as an element in life and character. On the other hand, nothing 2. seems clearer to others than that all this is a gloss put by primitive consciousness upon regulations which in their origin were individually or socially, directly or indirectly, serviceable, and that accordingly the idea of end is prior to that of law. This is implied in the accepted doctrine of the original identity of morality with custom, which, according to the best authorities, "while always a common *rule* of conduct, aims at both individual and social *ends*." * "There is an idea," writes Green,† "which equally underlies the conception both of moral duty and legal right; which is prior, so to speak, to the distinction between them; which must have been at work in the minds of men before they could be capable of recognising any kind of action as one that *ought* to be done. This is the idea of a common good." "It was a fatal thing," says Höffding, ‡ "for the treatment of the problem of worth when Immanuel Kant reversed the relation, and tried to derive the concepts of purpose and of worth from the concept of the norm or law." In this chapter I propose to try to show how philosophical reflection forces this view upon us, and makes it impossible to

* Wundt, *Ethics*, I., p. 133, where however he emphasises the distinction between purpose and motive, and points out that "fulfilment of purpose, however complete, does not ensure their identity."

† *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bk. iii, ch. iii.

‡ *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 156.

rest in any conception of morality less ultimate than that which represents it as the system of conduct that is in harmony with the underlying purposes of human life.

To arrive at this result we have only, I believe, to follow the course which, as a matter of fact, men's reflections on the nature and content of the moral law have tended to take.

§ 28. Three Stages in Reflective Analysis.

(1) In more primitive times, and among individuals at a later stage of development who have not outgrown primitive notions, the law, we have seen, is conceived of as something purely external, represented by an immutable (usually divine) code. (2) At a later period, when reflection has shown this notion to be untenable, it has sought to supplement the defects of the traditional code, and to free the individual from bondage to an external authority, by appealing to the internal law of conscience. (3) At a later stage still these two forms of "legal" morality come to be recognised by reflection as unable to bear the light of criticism, and give way to a new conception altogether, whereby the law is seen to be related to an end, or to ends, which, as intrinsically desirable, are the source of the bindingness of duty.

§ 29. (1) Morality as Obedience to External Law.

The inevitableness and the educational value for a people, as for an individual, of the stage of submission to an inherited code of directions for conduct, have frequently been dwelt upon. The fear of the *law* is the beginning of wisdom. Equally inevitable is the reaction

of reflection on the contents of tradition and the discovery of conflict within them—ultimately of conflict between the whole notion of an external law and the inward freedom of the spirit.

(*a*) Such codes are found to contain elements which, though they are commonly regarded as of co-ordinate authority, are clearly of unequal importance. Thus ceremonial are bound up with moral injunctions, moral and religious with political. A notable example of the former confusion and its subsequent correction is to be found in the history of the Jews. The burdensome ceremonial legislation which had been insisted upon by the traditionalist as of equal importance and sustained by the same authority as the moral * begins in the time of Amos and Hosea,† through the force of altered circumstances and a higher and more reflective moral feeling, to be recognised as a matter of quite secondary importance, if not entirely irrelevant, or even abhorrent, to morality. In the teaching of Jesus and Paul, as is well known, the ceremonial has dropped entirely away. As an example of the way in which political duties may come to be recognised as distinct from and subordinate to moral and religious duties, we have the Greek drama of the *Antigone*. Its interest to the moral philosopher ‡ lies in the fact that it marks the recognition by the writer, and the Athenian people whom he addresses, of the inadequacy of a merely traditional and aphoristic code to meet the varied demands

* In the decalogue itself there are three clearly distinguished layers of religious, moral, and legal injunctions, corresponding to the first four, the fifth, and the last five Commandments.

† See Amos v. 21 foll. ; viii. 5 foll. ; Hosea vi. 6.

‡ See Caird's *Hegel* (Blackwood), p. 6 ; Jebb's *Antigone*, Introd., p. xxi.

of the moral life. In individual life it is unnecessary to illustrate the distress which the conflict between a moral command and political or paternal authority frequently creates in persons to whom moral duty has been presented solely or chiefly in the form of a system of external rules. The point to notice is, that so soon as differences in importance declare themselves we have passed beyond the idea of mere outward authority and taken our stand on the idea of inner sense.

(*b*) But the conflict is not confined to elements so obviously distinct as the ceremonial or political and the moral. Within the laws recognised as moral, contradictions necessarily rise. The commandment "Thou shalt not steal" may come into conflict with the commandment "Thou shalt do no murder,"* "Thou shalt not lie" with "Thou shalt do no injury to a fellow-creature." The practical needs of life are sufficient to reveal this defect in traditional morality, though conscious reflection is not slow to follow and emphasise the unconscious criticism of changing circumstances. Thus the industrial changes in Athens had already sapped the traditional code, before the criticism of the Sophists came to assist and accelerate its disintegration.

There are two ways in which the would-be conservators of a traditional code may, under these circumstances, endeavour to meet the difficulty. They may try to stretch the code so as to make it co-extensive with life. In other words, by inventing a system of explanations and exceptions they may attempt to find a rule for every possible variety of circumstances. This is the method of the rabbis to whom we owe the minute regulations of Jewish

* See Plato's *Republic*, § 331 and whole passage.

legalism.* It is that which was adopted by the Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the express view † of maintaining the religious authority of the Church amid the general defection from its moral code. In this form it was mercilessly exposed by Pascal in his *Provincial Letters* (1656), who in his own way asserted in France the main position of Lutheran Protestantism by appealing to the inner witness of the heart against the sophistry of an authoritative and casuistical morality.‡ The chief theoretic objections against the attempt to preserve in this way the authority of a traditional code are that, in the first place, it is impossible to provide a rule for every conceivable complication of circumstances, and

* The startling and paradoxical form of much of the teaching in the Gospels is probably to be explained by the conscious purpose of the Teacher to oppose the casuistical method of the scribes to which this led. He desires to set the principle in its clearest light, and to cut off every loophole of escape. See Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, I., p. 134 (Eng. Tr.).

† "They believe it," says Pascal, "for the good of religion that they should govern all consciences"; and he puts into the mouth of a Jesuit, as an explanation of the grand object of his society, "never to repulse any one, let him be who he may, and so avoid driving people to despair."

‡ For a forcible contrast between the casuistical spirit of the Jesuits and the Protestant conception of an inward light revealing a universal law see T. H. Green's *Lectures on the English Commonwealth*, I. (Works, Vol. III., p. 282). The modern view of casuistry has been well expressed by Burke: "The place of every man determines his duty. If you ask, *Quem te Deus esse jussit?* you will be answered when you resolve this other question, *Humana qua parte locatus es in re?* I admit, indeed, that in morals, as in all things else, difficulties will sometimes occur. Duties will sometimes cross one another. Then questions will arise, Which of them is to be placed in subordination? Which of them may be entirely superseded? These doubts give rise to that part of moral science called

secondly, even although it were possible to do so, and to bear these rules continually in mind, this could only
2 mean the destruction of morality, which would thus be reduced to the unintelligent application of authoritative commands.

Another way is to seek for one chief commandment among many lesser ones.* Thus the doubts and difficulties of the faithful were settled in the Christian Church by advancing the doctrine of Passive Obedience, according to which the supreme duty was implicitly to accept the decisions of king and pontiff as the oracles of God. The demand for such a commandment springs from a truer

casuistry, which, though necessary to be well studied by those who would become expert in that learning, who aim at becoming what, I think, Cicero somewhere calls *artifices officiorum*, it requires a very solid and discriminating judgment, great modesty and caution, and much sobriety of mind in the handling, else there is a danger that it may totally subvert those offices which it is its object only to methodise and reconcile. Duties at their extreme bounds are drawn very fine, so as to become almost evanescent. In that state some shade of doubt will always rest on these questions when they are pursued with great subtilty. But the very habit of stating these extreme cases is not very laudable or safe, because in general it is not right to turn our duties into doubts."—*Appeal from New to Old Whigs* (Bell, Vol. III., p. 81).

* On a celebrated occasion when the question, "Which is the great commandment?" was raised, the misunderstanding it involved was shown by the selection in reply of one that could not by its very nature be a commandment at all, being a direction to *feel*, not to act. In reality the answer went beyond the idea of law, and substituted for it a *principle* of action. It expressed this principle in subjective terms of feeling (love), but other passages show that it was conceived also in terms of an objective end. It was "the Kingdom of God" which "is within you." The distinction between Rule and Rational End corresponds to that between "the Law" and "the Gospel," between the ten words and the good word or the word about the Good.

instinct—the instinct, namely, to seek a principle of unity which will introduce order and subordination into the multiplicity of the traditional code. So far it is right. It is wrong in that the principle that is sought is still an external one. It unifies by suppressing and destroying, not by co-ordinating and vitalising the parts. In this way the doctrine just referred to meant in this country the suppression of the inward witness of conscience against untruth and injustice in favour of the duty of obedience to the powers that be. Or, to take another example, the golden rule that we should love our neighbour as ourselves has been referred to in the above note as a principle of conduct rather than a commandment. But it has frequently been interpreted by devout Christians in the latter sense, and in this case it obviously leaves room for conflict and contradiction between its terms. Thus I have heard it seriously argued that it only commands us to love our neighbour *as* ourselves, the implication being that when, as often happens, a conflict arises between our own and our neighbour's advantage, we require a further guide. The answer which is merely authoritative decides in favour of one side or the other, and settles the dispute by making an arbitrary selection of one of two apparently contradictory maxims. The discovery, on the other hand, of a principle which, without claiming practical infallibility, may mediate between them, and give each its place in an organic system of duties, is the problem of rational ethics.

(*c*) A further difficulty is raised by reflection upon the nature of the moral life itself. If, as appears according to the view we are considering, this consists in obedience to a law which is merely "given," it does not require much insight to see that, however august the authority

upon which it rests,* this authority itself can only be grounded on a *force majeure*. In other words, the interest which man takes in it can only be an indirect one, having been made artificially to attach to it by means of threatened punishments and promised rewards. But what is this again but the destruction of morality? For whatever else morality may be, it is universally acknowledged by all who reflect upon it to be something more than slavish submission to a superior will on the ground of its superior power.†

§ 30 (2) The Law as Internal—Conscience—Intuitionalism as Ethical Theory.

These difficulties it has been sought to meet by representing the standard of moral judgment under another form. The law, it has been said, that constrains us in the field of conduct is not really an external law at all, or this only in so far as it finds a response in the inner law of conscience. It is this inner law that is the authoritative court of appeal. The external law may contain irrelevant matter, and enjoin at times contradictory lines of conduct; but we are not left without an inward witness and guide that is sufficient for all emergencies, and is the ultimate standard and test of moral judgments.

This view differs from the first in that it has been worked out into a philosophical theory of the general nature of our moral life. As we have already seen, it was by appealing to the inner witness of the heart

* To the Greek, Themis (Law) was the daughter of Uranos (Heaven). The Jews, as is well known, traced their moral code to the legislation of Sinai.

† On the subject of this paragraph generally, see Ziegler's *Social Ethics*, Lecture II.

that Pascal sought to recall the mind of Christendom from a misleading view of the nature and contents of the moral law. Pascal, however, was content with the protest contained in his famous Letters against the practical evils of the Jesuit system; and, being without speculative interest, failed to develop his principle of an inner witness into a reasoned system of moral philosophy. This task was left to a later generation, and was undertaken as a reply, not to the casuistry of the Jesuits, but to attempts like that of the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588—1679), to dispense with any distinct principle of right and wrong, and to find the ultimate basis of morality in the purely natural instinct of self-love.*

We are here concerned with the theory as representing a point midway between the view which identifies morality with obedience to a code of commandments received from without and that which seeks to find in it the expression of some intelligible principle. It is in this sense that Mill refers to it as the theory "which

* It is in the light of this antagonism that intuitionalism in its two leading English representatives, Bishop Butler and Dr. James Martineau, is best understood. It is not possible here to enter into any detailed account of the points of similarity and difference in their mode of establishing their conclusions. In general we should find that they exhibit opposite merits and opposite defects. Butler (1692–1752), whose psychology is much in advance of his time, rightly perceives that affections ought not to be distinguished as selfish and unselfish, or made the object of moral judgment in any proper sense at all apart from the objects (wealth, power, happiness of others, etc.) to which they attach and which give them their moral quality. (See, *e.g.*, *Sermon VIII.*, init.) On the other hand he fails to maintain the intuitional point of view throughout, and even admits that the suggestions of reasonable self-love, which takes into account

reigns supreme wherever the idolatry of Scripture texts has abated, and the influence of Bentham's philosophy has not yet reached." *

Neglecting differences of statement in different writers we may summarise the doctrine in the propositions (1) That conscience is something ultimately simple and underived. (2) That its judgments are intuitive: on the presentation of actions in fact or in imagination they form themselves instinctively. Acts of fraud and cowardice are condemned, acts of truthfulness, courage, self-restraint are approved, without reason sought or assigned. (3) Hence its peculiar authority, commanding our allegiance irrespective of all secondary considerations of pleasure or utility. (4) Hence, too, its universality. It is found among all races, the lowest as well as the highest, and in all normal individuals. By this it is not meant that it is found everywhere in equally developed form, any more than is the faculty of discriminating colours or of reasoning, but that what-

the rewards decreed by the Deity in a future life for those who keep His revealed commandments, may be accepted as a working substitute for the voice of conscience. (See *Sermon III.*, fin.) Martineau (1805-1900), on the other hand, consistently refuses to compromise the disinterestedness of actions prescribed by conscience by admitting considerations derived from the nature of the object or consequences in any form. It may, however, be questioned whether this ethical consistency is not purchased at the expense of psychological accuracy. For when we come to Dr. Martineau's account of the actual judgments of conscience we find it maintained, in opposition to Butler and the analysis on p. 59 above, that these are immediate pronouncements on the relative value of feelings, affections, or "springs of action," without reference to the objects to which they attach. (See *Types of Ethical Theory*, Part II., Book I.)

* *Essay on Comte and Positivism*, p. 71.

ever development the faculty may subsequently undergo it is innate in just the same sense as are the faculties of sight and hearing, and just as universal as these are in all normally constituted human beings.

§ 31. Criticism of Ordinary Objections to Intuitionalist View.

In criticism of this view it might be thought sufficient to point to its general incompatibility with the modern doctrine of evolution. It is quite true, it may be said, that our judgments of right and wrong possess the immediacy that is claimed for them. With the thought of lying or stealing is bound up the thought of wrong doing, with that of truth and honesty the thought of right. So far as the fact therefore is concerned the theory seems to be on solid ground. But in view of what we know of the conditions of racial and individual mental growth such "immediacy" is no longer a mytsery. It is precisely paralleled by our ordinary recognitions and expert judgments, and is no more evidence of an innate faculty than these are.*

Such a criticism, however, would not be final, as it would be possible to appeal from it to the unexplained and ultimately inexplicable differences between our rudimentary feelings and sensations. No "evolution," it might be argued, can ever throw any light on the question why violet is the colour we see under one stimulus, green under another, or why they should be *seen* at all. These sensations are unique and ultimate, and if these why not our feelings of right and wrong? †

* See Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 319.

† This is the ground taken up by Mr. G. E. Moore, the most recent advocate of the theory, which he states in a new form. (See Appendix A at end.)

Nor do I think that this can be met by the assertion that the judgments of conscience fail upon scrutiny to show the easily recognisable character which the theory attributes to them, as proved by the fact that they may easily be mistaken for various less dignified judgments and feelings: mere sense of propriety, reverence for custom, or fear of committing an offence against etiquette.* For this does not seem to be true. An appeal to consciousness seems to reveal a clearly distinguishable line of demarcation between the two phenomena, failure to distinguish which is as much a matter of intellectual as of moral obtuseness.†

For these reasons I have preferred, keeping to the principle of following its own logic, to found the criticism of this theory on the difficulties that are met with in any attempt to apply it consistently to practice, and its failure to live up to its own profession of constituting an internal principle.

§ 32. Elements in Conscience.

The appeal, we have seen, is to conscience; but it is clear, when we reflect upon it, that conscience involves

* "You ride using another man's season ticket, or you tell a white lie, or speak an unkind word; and conscience, if a little used to such things, never winces. But you bow to the wrong man in the street, or you mispronounce a word, or you tip over a glass of water, and then you agonise about your shortcoming all day long; yes, from time to time for weeks. Such an impartial judge is the feeling of what you ought to have done."—Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 53, 54.

† The case of survivals such as that mentioned p. 84 n., in which what has come to be a mere convention is still mistaken for a moral obligation, is different.

at least two distinguishable elements. (*a*) There is an intellectual element. Conscience is knowledge or *judgment*. This, we have seen, is not merely logical judgment. It is not merely a judgment of fact. It is also judicial.* It is a judgment upon fact. This judicial attitude of conscience is a prominent characteristic of it. Conscience in its usual manifestations seems to be engaged in a species of judicial investigation. Older writers delighted in this metaphor, which they worked out to show that, as common language seems to imply, conscience is at once lawgiver, accuser, witness, and judge. Conscience, it is said, "commands," conscience "accuses," conscience "bears witness," conscience "acquits" or "condemns." They might have added to this pluralism of function that it is also executioner, seeing that it punishes with "stings" peculiar to it. So prominent is this function of judging, that by some it has been held to be its chief or only one. It is thought to be in a peculiar sense the voice of reason, and has been elevated into the position of a special faculty, which under the name of the moral faculty, or the faculty of moral judgment, had a prominent place assigned to it in the older text-books. (*b*) It is clear, however, that this is not the only element, or perhaps the most distinctive. It is as involving a characteristic *feeling* that the judgments of conscience come most home to us. This is especially marked, as is to be expected, in judgments upon past conduct,—the feeling of remorse, as is well known, being one of the most violent of human emotions. Hence some writers have gone to the opposite extreme from those who would

* In the language of recent psychology it is a 'value-judgment."

exclude feeling altogether, and claimed for conscience that it is wholly a matter of emotion.* This view seems to gain support from popular language, which substitutes "moral sentiment" and "moral feeling" for conscience, and endows them with all the judicial attributes which we have seen to belong to the latter. That this view involves the inaccurate use of language is obvious, inasmuch as feeling may emphasise and, in the metaphorical sense referred to above, give effect to the judgments of conscience, but as feeling it is dumb and cannot pronounce them. Nevertheless the side of the phenomena of conscience which is here emphasised is a true and important one.†

§ 33. Defects of Conscience as Ultimate Standard.

(*a*) If with this fact before us we now return to the criticism of the Intuitionalist theory, we may state the first serious difficulty as follows: So long as the two elements of conscience just described are in harmony with each other—so long, that is, as the appropriate feeling accompanies the intellectual approval or condemnation of an act—little practical difficulty may arise in the conduct of life. But suppose, as is frequently the case, that reason approves of a line of conduct which yet, on being chosen, is accompanied by a feeling of moral aversion or remorse. How are we to explain such a conflict? and which of the conflicting elements must

* "The approbation of praise and blame cannot," says Hume, (*Inquiry concerning Principles of Morals*, § 1), "be the work of judgment, but of the heart, and is not a speculative proposition or affirmation, but an active feeling or sentiment."

† On the general subject of conscience, see Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 153 foll.; Dewey, *op. cit.*, pp. 182 foll. Also below, p. 256 foll.

we follow? * Psychologically, the explanation is simple enough. It is that feeling is the conservative element in human life. In the present case it continues to attach to certain lines of conduct in the form of remorse, or, as we say, "qualms" of conscience, even after reason, the radical and revolutionary element in life, has pronounced in their favour as morally innocent.† The ethical question, however, still remains, Which of these elements has the more authoritative claim upon us? Whatever our answer to this may be (whether we take our stand upon the instinctive feeling, or upon the rational judgment), shall we not have to go further, and seek for a reason for our preference some standard of judgment elsewhere than in the witness of consciousness itself? ‡

(*b*) But secondly, within the field of the particular element of conscience which we have described as judgment, serious difficulties present themselves. What, it may be asked, are these judgments? The common answer is, that they represent the generally recognised principles of right and wrong: as that lying, cheating, unchastity are to be reprobated; truthfulness, honesty, temperance are subjects of approbation. In

* The reader will supply instances for himself. The contradiction between reason and feeling which some of us will recollect, when first we permitted ourselves to take a row or attend a concert on Sunday, is a good example from contemporary life.

† Another instance is the feeling that continues to keep us attached to institutions after we know them to be useless, or to individuals after they have ceased to merit our regard.

‡ Shaftesbury acknowledges this when he admits, in an interesting passage, the possibility of disturbing and impairing the natural sense of right and wrong—*e.g.*, by an immoral religion—and inconsistently proposes as a counteractive a high ideal of "the good of our species or public."—*Inquiry concerning Virtue*, I. 3, § 2.

other words it is the "middle axioms"* which are intuitively discerned. But if this is so, what becomes of the universality which we saw above is claimed on behalf of the judgments of conscience? Instead of the universal agreement on the main lines of moral obligation which the theory demands, we find a perfect chaos of contradictory principles at various times and in various places,† and the standard of right and wrong is still to seek.

If it be sought to meet this difficulty by giving a different answer to our question, and maintaining with some that "though undoubtedly men differ in different ages and countries as to what they judge to be right and wrong, yet they are all agreed as to the fact that there is a right and a wrong, and this is what is declared to be innate," this is to give up the whole position. For it amounts to the assertion that we know intuitively that there *is* a standard, but that intuition is helpless to tell us what the standard is or what it requires.

If, finally, it be said that what is intuitively apprehended is not right and wrong as such, but the true end of human life, we have passed to a new theory altogether. We have passed from the theory that the standard of moral judgment is ultimately to be conceived of as a Law, and we have substituted for it a theory of the End. In this form Intuitionalism can no longer maintain itself as an independent theory. For whatever end we suppose

* What Aristotle calls the major premise of the practical syllogism: "All lying is wrong"; the completed argument being, "This would be a lie, therefore this is wrong."

† See the classical proof that there are "no innate practical principles."—Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book I., ch. iii., and Book V., ch. ii., below.

thus to be intuitively revealed, the task of ethics is still before us, viz., to show that moral judgments do not rest on a number of isolated intuitions, but are organically related to an end or good. On the other hand, on any theory of the end, we may very well admit that its worthiness is intuitively discerned, in the sense that it is the necessary postulate of morality, and is not in the last resort susceptible of other proof.*

(*c*) This leads to a third objection. In discussing the conception of morality as obedience to external law, we saw that difficulties rose, not only from the demand forced upon us, both practically and theoretically, to find some principle of unity in the particular injunctions of which it consists, but also from the consideration of the nature of its authority. If the law is merely external, it can only be recognised by man in virtue of its sanctions, that is, the pains and penalties which are decreed by another as the price of disobedience;

* For an exhaustive discussion of different interpretations that may be put on the intuitionalist doctrine, see Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., ch. viii. Professor Sidgwick (1838–1900) himself regards happiness as the supreme end (Book III., ch. xiv., § 2), and thus claims to be a Utilitarian. With the utilitarian point of view, however, he unites elements drawn from intuitional and theological ethics. Thus he maintains that, while in virtue of the constitution of our sensitive nature, agreeable and satisfied consciousness is the only ultimate standard of the value of actions, it is reason or intuition that informs us that another's happiness is of equal value with our own (*Ibid.*, ch. xiii. and cp. p. 118 below). When again he comes to discuss the question of the coincidence between virtue and happiness he seems to find ultimate support for the claims of conscience against the suggestions of egoism in the conviction of a divinely appointed moral order (Book IV., ch. vi.). As he suggests no means of combining these different points of view into a systematic whole, his theory does not entirely escape the reproach of eclecticism.

and this was seen to be the substitution for morality of a long-sighted prudence, and therewith the destruction of it. To meet this objection it was suggested that the law is not merely external, but is the voice of conscience. This led us into some account of conscience, with the result that its injunctions have been seen to lie just as much outside one another as those of external law, and therefore leave us with our explanation or principle of unity still to seek.

We have now, therefore, to ask, in the third place, with reference to the authority of the law on the intuitional theory, whether it has really been made internal by being called the law of conscience? To be "internal" in the sense demanded, the law must be seen to be really *our own*, not merely the law of some *part* of us. If it is the law of a part only, it is still external to the self, and obedience rendered to it by the self is, after all, obedience to something which is external Our question, therefore, resolves itself into this: Is conscience, on this theory, the name for the whole self, desiring judging and feeling in a particular way, or is it only a part, connected indeed with the self in that it inhabits the same body, yet to all intents and purposes a stranger there?

Now our final objection to the theory that we must rest content in ethics with the intuitions of conscience is that, as commonly maintained, *it leaves the law still external* in the sense just explained. Conscience is not explained, as on any true theory it must be, as the whole self judging of its own acts,* but (as the very phraseology of the intuitional theory implies) as a special faculty. It is the "Faculty of Moral Judgment,"—an innate and inexplicable power of moral discrimination, sitting apart from

* See below, pp. 256 foll.

the rest of human consciousness, like the priestess in the oracle at Delphi, and authoritatively imposing its decrees upon the human will. The whole conception may easily be shown in psychology to be contrary to all sound analysis; it is here seen to contradict the presupposition implied in the whole vocabulary of moral praise and blame, viz., that morality is free obedience to a law imposed by man as a self-conscious unity upon the various subordinate elements of his own nature.

§ 34. (3) Morality as determined by End.

There is only one way of correcting this theory so as to meet the demand made upon it in the last paragraph. It may be said that conscience is the whole or true self claiming to legislate for the parts. Its claim is the claim of the self as a conscious and rational being, to judge any particular manifestation of itself in voluntary action. Its voice is the voice of the true self, or of the self as a whole, which, as addressed to the false or partial self of particular desires and passions, rightfully assumes the tone of command, and has built up in connection with the varied circumstances and desires of life that system of authoritative commandments known as the moral law. Morality consists in obeying this voice. Man's freedom just means his power of being moral, *i.e.*, of obeying the imperative of reason or of his true self. But, in making this correction, we have once again passed beyond the conception of the standard as Law, and substituted in its place the idea of an End. There is indeed a moral *law* which is authoritative and supreme; but it is now seen to be so by no indefeasible right of its own, but in virtue of its relation to a larger self, as the End which man, *quâ* rational being, seeks to realise.

The following books will be occupied with the endeavour to show that this conception is that to which we find ourselves forced, and what in detail it involves. Meantime it will aid the student, in realising the relation between the conceptions of end and of law or rule, if we return to the point from which we started in the present book and inquire how far the logical priority which we have here claimed for the former accords with psychological fact.

CHAPTER III.

REASON AND CONSCIENCE.

§ 35. Purpose in Human Life.

The view to which we have been led in considering what is implied in the recognition of a moral law is in essential harmony with the teaching of modern psychology on the central place of purpose or end in human life. While the idea that the world is arranged to serve man's purposes has fallen into discredit, the idea that he is in essence the arranger of his own world—has purpose in and for himself—has everywhere gained ground. Modern biology may be said to be founded on the notion that what distinguishes living things from dead matter in general is their purposefulness. They are controlled not from without, but by inward promptings, centering in what Spinoza called the effort *in suo esse perseverare* - the struggle to continue in being and to be a particular thing. Man differs from all lower kinds of life in that he is conscious of his purposes. Purposes exist not only *in* him but *for* him. The animals, said Kant, are guided by law, man by the idea of law, and this is true also of *end*, which we have seen underlies the idea of law. It is this that we mean when we speak of the rationality of man.

§ 36. Purpose and Reason.

It is important to realise all that it implies. Though it is obvious that reason thus enters qualifyingly into human life, it may be maintained that it does so merely as the power of adapting means to end and of calculating results. If not, as some earlier philosophers thought, the cunningest of machines, man is the cunningest of animals. He is a being of large discourse, but his discourse is of means and instruments; the ends themselves are given to him in his instincts and passions, as they are to the lower animals. But a little reflection is sufficient to show that man's rationality does not stop with fuller control of the means to satisfy appetites and passions which he shares with the lower animals. It enables him to break away from this lower circle altogether, and set before himself ends involving the subordination, it may be the total extinction, of the lower appetites. Familiar examples of such "rational" ends are knowledge or skill sought for their own sake, the perfection of some trait distinctive of human nature, the victory of some impersonal cause or principle. They prove that ends which thus carry us beyond momentary passion or mere bodily and individual well-being are not exceptional phenomena, but constitute a large part of normal human life. It is in a "being" or form of life in which these are possible that man normally seeks to persevere. When we compare this new circle of motives with the bodily appetites we find that they differ from them in two main respects. In the first place *they are objects which we may always be attaining, but which are never completely attained.* They are *ideals* rather than definite realisable things

or conditions. While the satisfaction of a bodily desire leads nowhere beyond itself, the attainment in any degree of these self-constituted objects as a rule only opens up new vistas of achievement. In being rational they are "progressive." In the second place (and this brings us back to the question before us) *they involve the control and subordination of the simpler and more nearly animal desires, and the organisation of life on a new basis.* This is so fundamental a point of practical and theoretic ethics that no excuse is needed for dwelling upon it here.

§ 37. The Authority of our Purposes.

The essence of rational as opposed to merely instinctive self-direction is, we have seen, the power of breaking through the narrow round of recurring appetite. But the very narrowness and instinctiveness of the life of the lower animals keep it true to its own centre. The animals do not live "dissipated" lives. In the power of selecting his own ends and setting up controlling purposes, man, on the other hand, runs the risk of making a selection which, instead of raising him above, may sink him below the level of the animals. Having lost the natural order, he may fail to rise to the spiritual. Having eaten of the tree of knowledge, instead of becoming as a god he may sink below the beasts. Ends essentially incompatible with his *esse* as a progressive being may usurp the place of those that are in harmony with it, and the best, through its corruption, may become the worst. Instead of being simply non-rational, human life may become irrational. To realise its own final end or idea, to be purposeful in the full sense of the word, it must be rational in the still further sense

of substituting for the merely natural organisation of the instincts one that is self-created and self-sustained.

How is this possible? Remote as is the rational life we have been describing from crude instinct and passion, it is founded upon it, and the more we know of its origin and history the more recent and comparatively unstable we realise it to be. How, we may ask, does it succeed in establishing itself at all? How is the control of "reason" rendered possible?

For the answer we must turn to the account which psychology gives of the formation of the sentiments or secondary springs of action. We start from instincts and impulses differing, as we have seen, from those of the animals only in that we have the power of selecting and dwelling upon the objects of them. But this power is all-important, for it enables us to give fixity and stability to anything that happens to satisfy the instinct or feeling, and to make it a centre round which feelings and ideas may gather as a crystal round its nucleus. It is thus that, on the basis of elementary appetites, sentiments of affection for persons and things—a parent, a plaything, a home—or again, for qualities and ideals, an accomplishment or type of character, build themselves into our lives. Partly by memory of individual experience, partly by the force of example, partly by the support given to them by the approval of public opinion, partly by the constancy with which, more or less unconsciously, they occupy our thoughts, these objects take root in the affections, and, as they root themselves, come to exhibit an active hostility to all that is opposed to them, an active affinity to all that favours them. It is in some such way that we must conceive of the secondary purposes that form the distinctive mark of human life,

establishing themselves in individuals and communities, and constituting literally a second nature, which has the power of modifying and controlling the suggestions of the first.

I have spoken of this second nature as though it were superimposed, as something wholly different from the first, but there is no such discontinuity. The pressure to which our instincts and passions are subjected by our "interests" does not involve their suppression, but the direction of them into channels in which they will be an assistance instead of an obstruction. Wherever we have such centres of practical interest we have the condition of such organising pressure, with an accompanying feeling of obligation on the effective operation of which depends all that we mean by purposefulness, consistency, loyalty in human life.*

§ 38. Conscience as the Unity of Purposes.

Is there any analogy between the authority of conscience and the sense of constraint which the deeper and more permanent purposes of life exercise over our ordinary behaviour? The argument of the previous chapter, which aimed at showing that in the analysis of moral judgments we cannot stop short of the idea of some final end, seems to support the view that there is. I believe that this is the right answer to our question. In the pressure of our sentiments and interests we have a feeling precisely analogous (though on a different plane) to the pressure of conscience. Indeed, by a suggestive use of language the feeling of harmony

* It is this fundamental truth that underlies Professor Royce's interesting attempt in his recent book on the *Philosophy of Loyalty* to express the principle of the moral life in terms of loyalty.

or discord of a line of conduct with such a ruling purpose is often spoken of as itself endowed with quasi-moral authority. We hear of the student's conscience, the artist's conscience, a professional conscience, and a society conscience, whose requirements may go quite beyond, or again be actually opposed to, ordinary morality. I am not here concerned with the difference between these partial consciences and conscience in the more general sense of the word, interesting and important for ethics though this question is, but rather with the unity of psychological principle which underlies them. For just as we have been led to see how feelings of approbation and disapprobation of particular acts may have their source in the dominance of wider and more inclusive interests, so we can understand how there may be still more comprehensive ends to which these in turn may be subordinate, and which may in turn exercise authority over them. Whether there are such ends and what they are, more particularly whether they are expressible in terms of any single end, is the question of the succeeding book. Should it be said that the very fact that we can put such questions shows how irrelevant the above analogy is, seeing that even if they can be shown to exist, they clearly lie for most people below the threshold of consciousness as unconscious assumptions rather than conscious purposes, constituting, to use a happy distinction of Wundt's, moral *facts* rather than moral *ideas*, this indeed points to an important difference. If, as is claimed by those who believe in the existence of such an end or totality of ends, it represents what is of intrinsic value to man as a rational being, we may expect that the interest in it resembles far more closely an ingrained and inherited instinct than a self-chosen

purpose. But the difference ought not to be exaggerated. The interests to which I have likened it may operate to a large extent unconsciously in individuals and societies. On the other hand, from the beginning at least of philosophical reflection, there is a tendency to convert the unconscious presuppositions of the moral life into its conscious motives and regulating principles. How these principles must be conceived of, how they differentiate into ideals of character, how, finally, their apparent multiplicity is compatible with the unity we feel ourselves forced to ascribe to human nature, are the questions that must henceforth occupy us.

BOOK III

THEORIES OF THE END

CHAPTER I.

THE END AS PLEASURE: EMPIRICAL HEDONISM.

§ 39. **Man himself the End, but what is Man?**

THE point of view reached at the close of the preceding discussion was the one taken up through a true instinct by the founders of European philosophy. There was much in the general outlook of the Greek mind as well as in the organisation of life, and even in language, to suggest it. Such words as "end," "happiness," "good," and even "the good," were familiar in the vocabulary of ordinary life. The idea of a highest end or happiness was easily suggested by the most superficial glance at the hierarchy of the arts and industries. The contemporaries of Socrates were surprised at the perversity with which he kept his discourse on the level of the market-place. But the tenacity with which he and his great successors, Plato and Aristotle, clung to the analogy between art and morality was at once result and source of their deepest insight. Aristotle only made the starting-point of the whole movement explicit when he opened his *Ethics* by offering the economic structure of society, wherein the lower arts serve the higher, as a proof of the existence of a highest good.

In the further interpretation of this good, moreover, it never struck the Greek to look for it anywhere else than in human life itself. Life was made for man. Good must be something which it was possible to reach within the four corners of human life: something attainable, if not actually here and now, yet in and through activities continuous with those that occupy the present. The term "self-realisation" has been criticised as though it were an invention of modern idealists. The idea is one which underlies all Greek philosophy, and the phrase itself is merely a translation of the word ἐνέργεια, in which Aristotle seeks to sum up the best of its teaching as to the nature of the end. In al this the founders of ethical philosophy stamped upon it the form it has ever since retained. If it seemed to lose it temporarily in the thinkers who, with Kant, sought the starting-point rather in the idea of law, recent philosophy has made up for the aberration by the whole-heartedness of its return to the Greek point of view.

Yet from the outset it became manifest that man's life was an ambiguous oracle to which to appeal, containing in it at least two factors of apparently opposite tendencies. On the one hand there were the ordinary needs and desires—each with its burden of pleasure or of pain according as it was satisfied or disappointed. On the other there was the insistent consciousness of a deeper need which implied compulsion and control of the more superficial and insistent desires. Which of these two, natural feeling and impulse or reason and restraint, represented more truly the nature that was to be realised? Here was no mere theoretic difference, but a "deep-set boundary line" between two different views of life and practical tendencies. Granted that the vulgar pleasures

of the hour or the day were obviously unsatisfying, could it be held that any form of life was desirable which did not bring with it a surplus of joy? Could the end be reached by any one who could not sum it up in "I have felt"? On the other hand, what was feeling without *being*, and what was that *being* worth which was not the being of a man controlling himself by his own ideas and asserting his inborn freedom? It was inevitable that philosophy should separate before it could unite these divergent elements. If we follow it in the separation, it is that we may understand more fully what the union implies.

Starting with the theory that seeks for the standard in a form of feeling, we may try to give it definiteness by a review of some of the chief phases through which it has passed in the history of philosophy.

§ 40. What is meant by saying that the Standard of Moral Judgment is Pleasure?

This theory in its simplest and most general form rests upon two dogmas: (1) that conduct has value in proportion to the amount of pleasure it produces. One line of conduct is good relatively to another which, when it is possible to produce less, produces more pleasure; that is bad which, it being possible to produce more, produces less pleasure. And (2) that there is no difference in motive—all men being moved alike by the one motive, desire for pleasure. The difference is in the amount of pleasure which, owing to insight into the conditions of happiness and their previous moral training, their actions tend to secure. Thus, the intemperate man is reprehensible, not because he makes pleasure his end,—we all not only do that, but we cannot do anything else,

—but because he habitually chooses courses of action which involve to himself, his family, and to society at large an amount of pain far exceeding the pleasure which the momentary indulgence gives to himself. When it is possible for him to create a balance of pleasure by restraining himself, he has done the reverse and created a balance of pain. Similarly the liar gains immediate pleasure or advantage,—so far his act is good,—but the pain and disadvantage ensuing to society, in increased suspicion, mutual distrust, impaired credit, etc., far outweigh the pleasure, and the conduct must accordingly be stamped as bad. The worst conduct is that which under the circumstances yields the least, the best is that which yields the greatest sum-total of pleasure.*

§ 41. Ancient Forms of the Theory.

This theory of the end, in a more or less fully developed form, has, as is well known, played an important part in the history of ethical thought. It made its appearance in the early morning of philosophy. The teaching of Socrates, whose influence, like that of Christ, was rather due to his life and

* These two principles are clearly indicated by J. S. Mill in his classical statement of what he called the Greatest Happiness Principle. "The creed holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is meant pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness pain and the privation of pleasure." There are, he explains, many supplementary questions. "But these supplementary questions do not affect the theory of life on which the theory of morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain" (*Utilitarianism*, ch. ii.).

character than to any system of doctrine which he propounded, contained a number of elements loosely held together. Upon his death these fell apart, as did the different elements in Christian doctrine,* and were taken up by different groups of his followers, and made the basis of different theories of the end of life. One of these groups seized upon the element of feeling, and under the name of the Cyrenaics† (from the city of Cyrene, to which Aristippus, the chief exponent of the doctrine, belonged) became the precursors of the later and better-known school of Epicureans. They held that pleasure was the end, interpreting this to mean the pleasure of the moment, and, as the theory fell into the hands of men of less refinement of taste and insight than the founders, using it as little more than an excuse for self-indulgence.

At a later time the theory was taken up by Epicurus,‡ who deepened and dignified it (1) by connecting it with the atomic theory of the nature and origin of matter as expounded by Leucippus and Democritus, (2) by supplementing it with a sensationalist psychology, and (3) by interpreting pleasure so as to include the higher social and intellectual enjoyments. The noble expression which was given to this theory of the nature of the world and human life by the greatest of the Roman poets, Lucretius, § is well known.

* For example, Faith and Works as represented by Paul and James, Universalism and Judaism by Paul and Peter.

† See Zeller's *Socrates and Socratic Schools.* Walter Pater's historical romance *Marius the Epicurean* gives probably the subtlest presentation of the inner spirit of Cyrenaicism that we have.

‡ Zeller's *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics.* See Professor W. Wallace's *Epicureanism.*

§ *De Rerum Natura,* Eng. Tr. by Munro.

§ 42. The Theory in Modern Times.

The doctrine has been revived in modern times and developed chiefly by English thinkers, who differ from their predecessors in antiquity (1) in seeking to provide it with a securer basis in philosophy and psychology, (2) in applying it to the dynamics of the moral life in general, (3) in making the doctrine the starting-point for enlightened theories of legal and political, social and educational reform. The discussion of the first of these differences, involving as it does the whole scheme of the "associationist" philosophy, belongs to psychology rather than of ethics. The development of the theory in the direction indicated by the third difference coincides generally with the successive appearance of Egoistic, Universalistic, and Evolutionary Hedonism* to be discussed below, and need not further detain us here. The second, however, requires more detailed notice, as it contains the hedonistic doctrine of duty, and reveals at a glance both the strength and the weakness of the whole theory.

§ 43. The Sanctions of Morality.

We have seen how the theory starts from the assumption that pleasure or happiness is the natural and necessary object of desire, but how as reflection developed it was forced to recognise that the pleasure of the moment and of the individual and pleasure as a whole or of society may be entirely different things. However much the former may represent the actual motive-power in the individual—the object which is

* For the name see below (p. 109). For the Bibliography, p. 289.

actually desired—the latter as the object which is ultimately desirable represents the true standard of action. This is the ground of the distinction which ordinary language seeks to mark by the antithesis between duty and pleasure. To Hedonism these cannot stand for any difference of motive. Nevertheless the fact remains that if the larger and remoter object is to be attained, the nearer and more individual has by some means to be brought into line with it. How is this done? How is it possible to prefer duty to pleasure? Only if there are considerations normally acting on the individual which may lead him just on the ground of pain and pleasure to prefer the conduct which promotes the more general end. But this is precisely what the constitution of the physical and social world actually provides. The laws of the physical world by the painful consequences they attach to thoughtless indulgence, of themselves teach us self-restraint. Similarly in the social world the individual finds himself faced by laws and ordinances, expressed and unexpressed, attaching their own penalties to conduct departing from the line which experience has marked out as that required by the general welfare, their own rewards of pleasure to that coinciding with it.

These reasons or persuasives to good conduct are the so-called "sanctions of morality," the enumeration of which is a characteristic addition to the modern form of the pleasure theory.

By the sanction of a *legal* enactment is meant the penalty that is annexed to the infringement of it. In ethics, as just explained, the meaning is extended to natural law, and is taken to include the pleasures which are the persuasives to conformity, as well as

the pains which act as deterrents from disobedience to moral law. The main sanctions of morality in this sense are five: (1) There is the *natural sanction*, by which are meant the physical pains which follow upon the disregard of natural laws, *e.g.*, in the over-indulgence of the appetites. (2) There is the *political sanction*, or the pains and penalties attached by law to such obviously "unfelicific" forms of conduct as theft, assault, libel, etc., and the public rewards and honours bestowed upon the social benefactor. (3) There is the *popular* or *social sanction*—the pleasures of social respect, gratitude, etc., which a favourable public opinion brings with it, and the pains of the disgrace attaching to forms of immoral conduct which do not come within the reach of the law as well as to those that do. (4) There is the *religious sanction*. Though this does not belong to the catalogue of legitimate motives on a naturalistic theory of ethics like ordinary Hedonism, yet in speaking of the sanctions or external persuasives to morality founded on the desire for pleasure and aversion to pain it is necessary to take account of the influence which fear of punishment and hope of reward in another life have exercised, and still continue to exercise, in the moral education of the race and the individual. (5) To these may be added, as a fifth, the *internal* or *moral sanction*, by which is meant simply the pleasures of a good conscience and the pains of remorse.*

We shall have occasion hereafter to discuss at length the presuppositions on which the whole theory is founded.

* For the theory of the sanctions of morality, see Bentham's *Morals and Legislation*, ch. iii.; Mill's *Utilitarianism*, ch. iii.; Bain's *Emotions and Will*, ch. x.; Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*, Pt. I., ch. 7; Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book II., ch. v.

Meantime it is sufficient to point out that to any but the Hedonist the phrase "sanctions of morality" is suspiciously like a contradiction in terms. Conduct which issues from regard for these sanctions is *not* morality, if by that we mean conduct which is morally approved. It may conform to a certain type and be externally indistinguishable from good conduct, but it is not *good*. The man who is temperate because he desires the rewards of temperance (whether these be earthly or heavenly, physical or social) is, as Plato pointed out, temperate by reason of a kind of intemperance. Similarly, the man who is courageous from fear of the pains which will be the consequence of cowardice is courageous by reason of a kind of cowardice. Appeals to the so-called moral sanctions, *i.e.*, to the pleasures of a good conscience (or the pains of remorse), as a motive to good conduct, appear, moreover, to involve an additional absurdity. The pleasure in question depends upon the approval of conscience, and this in turn depends on the disinterestedness of the conduct, *i.e*, upon the exclusion of the idea of personal pleasure from the motive. To point therefore to the pleasure likely to result from such approval, as a reason for well-doing, is to suggest a motive which, if accepted, would render approval impossible.

While obviously defective as an account of the ground of duty or of the latent motives of good character, yet as a statement of the influences at work in the development of moral interests this part of the theory is not

The later writers differ from Bentham in the emphasis they lay upon the "internal" sanction and the attention they have paid to the development of the sense of duty in the individual and the race. See Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, pp. 353 foll.

without its truth. We have already seen how the expectations of others, their censures and approvals, their examples and injunctions, may act upon undeveloped character, and how new standards of moral value may build themselves up under the silent pressure of public opinion, or the overt requirements of public order. The educational value of these influences cannot be overestimated. But it is important to understand what it is that is being effected by them. It is this that Hedonism so seriously misrepresents by conceiving of it as the substitution through habit of more artificial for more natural and deeply seated motives, as the inclosure of the individual, so to speak, in a straight-jacket in the hope that in time he will get accustomed to it and come to mistake it for his more natural wear. What these influences really effect is not the artificial repression of the deeper instincts and impulses of the normal individual, but the restraint of such of them as in his cruder state obstruct the course of normal development. It is therefore a fundamental error of principle to conceive of social education as a process of forcing conceptions of the general good upon a being whose fundamental need and dominant motive is something entirely different, instead of as the development of motives for activities that are necessary elements in that fullness of life which is the deepest of all human needs, and at a certain stage of moral evolution becomes the most pressing of all objects of human desire.

Returning to the discussion of the specific forms which Hedonism has taken in modern times, it is not difficult to see how they rise out of difficulties and ambiguities inherent in the theory itself.

§ 44. (1) Pleasure and Happiness.

Confusion is liable to be introduced into the discussion by the failure to distinguish between pleasure and happiness. Assuming that they both refer to a state of harmonious feeling, it does not follow, as is commonly assumed, either that the terms are synonymous, or that, if there be a distinction, happiness is only pleasure raised to a higher power by an arithmetical process of multiplication or addition.* The distinction between them reflected in ordinary usage, as in Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior," is founded on a qualitative difference in the modes of self-realisation which pleasure and happiness severally accompany, not merely on a quantitative difference in the amount of the feeling itself. Pleasure is the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of particular desires; happiness is the feeling which accompanies the sense that, apart from the satisfaction of momentary desires, and even in spite of the pain of refusal or failure to satisfy them, the self as a whole is being realised. † We have already questioned the propriety of describing the end in terms of either. Yet if this distinction be accepted there is less objection

The Greeks were the less inclined to the assumption which underlies modern Hedonism, that pleasure and happiness are interchangeable terms, or differ only as the part from the whole in that to them ἡδονή (= pleasure) conveyed a wholly different idea from εὐδαιμονία (= happiness), and accordingly Hedonism would have represented a wholly different theory from Eudaemonism.

† On this distinction the student is recommended to consult Dewey's *Psychology*, pp. 292-4. His definition of happiness in his more recent *Ethics*, p. 281, as the "agreement, whether anticipated or realised, of the objective conditions brought about by our endeavours with our desires and purposes," agrees, I think, with the above.

to expressing the good in terms of happiness than in terms of pleasure pure and simple. For while both descriptions of the end err in identifying it with a state of feeling, the happiness theory (Eudaemonism) has the advantage over the pleasure theory (Hedonism) that it refuses to consider the *summum bonum* as a mere aggregate of particular pleasures, and insists that it is pleasure for the self as a whole.*

To advance another step and call it blessedness, which, as Carlyle says, is better than happiness, would be less misleading still. Joy or blessedness may be defined as the feeling of pleasure which accompanies modes of conduct in which an existing harmony of activities is sacrificed to a higher conception of what a true harmony implies—in other words, in which the self as static is sacrificed to the self as progressive. Seeing, therefore, that, as already pointed out, man is essentially progressive, and that harmony is no sooner established between himself and his environment than it is broken into by aspirations after a still higher form of life, the theory which represents the emotional reaction of such aspirations and the activities resulting from them as the end, while theoretically not less erroneous than that which defines it in terms of any lower form of feeling, may yet, by reason of its implicit admissions, be less practically misleading.†

* Which, as we can never insist too often, is more than a mere aggregate of its parts.

† *Cp.* Mackenzie's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, pp. 164 foll., where the distinctions in the text are connected with that between simple consciousness, *e.g.*, of momentary states of pleasure or pain, consciousness of self as an individual, and self-consciousness or consciousness of self as partaking in a universal life.

§ 45. (2) Do Pleasures differ in Quality?

A difficulty suggested by the discussion in the preceding paragraph has risen within the school itself as to whether pleasures differ only in quantity, or in quality as well. The early Hedonists held that pleasures differ only as greater or less, and that, in estimating the comparative value of two or more lines of conduct, we have only to cast up the arithmetical total of the pleasures which they severally tend to produce. Mill, on the other hand, held that pleasures differ in quality as well. The controversy carries us into psychology, in which field the answer is seen to depend on considerations already touched on in a previous section, where it was pointed out that it is impossible to consider feelings, *quâ* feelings, as qualitatively differing from one another. It is only in virtue of the qualitative differences of the objects in connection with which they rise that we are justified in attributing qualitative difference to the feelings themselves. Thus, on the hypothesis that knowledge is a higher good than wealth or power, the pleasure of acquiring it may be judged to be higher than that of gratified vanity or ambition. But from the Hedonist's point of view how can this be? Knowledge can only be judged a higher end in so far as it is the source of a greater quantity of pleasure. In other words, differences in the value of objects are themselves reduced to quantitative differences in the feeling of pleasure they produce. To introduce, therefore, into the pleasure theory a qualitative difference among feelings which is not resolvable into quantitative, is to introduce a standard of *higher* or *lower* in a scale of relative dignity or worth not determinable in terms of greater or less pleasure-value. It is to go beyond the conception of self as a subject of

feeling, and to declare that there is another standard besides the greater or less agreeableness of its experiences, viz. their *worthiness* as experiences of a being who is more than feeling, and may have higher ends than pleasure.*

That Mill, in spite of so obvious a fallacy, should have insisted on the preferability of certain *kinds* of happiness, and explained it as resting on a sense of their harmony with an idea of human dignity, merely shows how open his mind was to truths which had been darkened by the theory in which he had been brought up. New wine had been poured into old bottles.

§ 46. (3) How are Pleasures calculated in respect to their Value?

For those Hedonists who hold the simpler and more logical view that pleasures differ only in respect to quantity, the question still remains, What dimensions must enter into the calculation? what elements enter into the "pleasure calculus"? We calculate the size of a room by the three dimensions of length, breadth, and height. What are the dimensions of a pleasure? Jeremy Bentham was at pains to formulate them as seven—intensity, duration, nearness, certainty, purity, fruitful-

* On this controversy see Mill's statement of the doctrine that there are differences of quality among pleasures, *Utilitarianism*, p. 12 (10th ed., 1888), and the earlier criticism of it in Kant's *Theory of Ethics* (Abbott), p. 109 (4th ed.); Green, *op. cit.*, Book III., ch. i., §§ 162 foll.; Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 foll.; Dewey, *Psychology*, pp. 46 foll. Also Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 203 foll. The criticism of the text is well summed up by Warner Fite: "Either quality is only another name for quantity, or it is opposed to quantity and yields different results. The double criticism is therefore in the former case meaningless, in the latter self-contradictory" (*An Introductory Study of Ethics*, p. 67).

ness,* extent. He seems to have borrowed the idea of the pleasure calculus from the Italian legalist Beccaria. By means of it he thought that "the precision and clearness and incontestableness of mathematical calculation were for the first time introduced into the field of morals," † and claimed to have made a great advance on the empiricism of his predecessors.

§ 47. (4) **Modern Forms of the Pleasure Theory.**

A difficulty of another kind is raised by the last of Bentham's list of sanctions. We might understand how intensities may be weighed against each other, we might even understand how intensity could be weighed against duration. But what is meant by weighing *extents*? If we were considering simply the pleasure of others we might see that, in the absence of any other standard, we ought to prefer the pleasure of the greater number.

* See *Morals and Legislation*, ch. iv. By *purity* is meant not any moral quality, but freedom from accompanying pain: an intellectual pleasure may in this respect take precedence of a sensual, on the ground that it does not involve subsequent pain, as the latter is liable to do. By the *fruitfulness* of a pleasure is meant the tendency to bring other pleasures with it, as when keeping an engagement involves the pleasures of a good conscience and the future benefits that might accrue to the good character for reliableness which is thus acquired.

† Works, Vol. III., p. 287; *Cp.* Montague's *Introduction to the Fragment in Government*, p. 36. The arithmetic of pleasure becomes more complicated when to the pleasures of this world are added the pleasures of the next. Thus Paley gave himself a longer sum by trying to combine the pleasure theory with the orthodox Christianity of his time. His naïve definition of virtue, as "doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God and for the sake of everlasting life," has been wittily said to combine "the maximum of error in the minimum of space." For a criticism of the whole idea of a "scientific Hedonism," see Warner Fite, *op. cit.*, Pt. I., ch. iii.

But how, on the hedonistic theory, is it possible for us to "consider simply" the pleasure of others? And, if it is a case of weighing our own pleasure against the pleasure of others, what is there in the latter to weigh? To give weight to the feelings of others independently of our own is to pass to a new theory of desire and a new standard of value altogether. If it be replied that extent is to be considered merely as a factor in the individual's own pleasure, it is clear that it stands on quite a different footing from the other dimensions, seeing that there may be those to whom it has no hedonic value at all, to whom the "pleasure of others" counts as zero.

Differences on this head have given rise to two different forms of Hedonism. Agreeing in the psychological doctrine that each not only does, but must, pursue what at the time appears to be the greatest pleasure, supporters of the pleasure theory have still differed as to the proper mode of formulating the end which is the standard of moral action. (1) There are those who maintain that the end of rational conduct is no other than the pleasure of the individual himself. Moral judgments are the judgments that are passed upon conduct according as it is adapted to secure this end in the highest degree possible for the individual, or, through his ignorance or folly, fails to do so. This section of the school is known as the Individualistic or Egoistic Hedonists.* (2) There is Altruistic or Universalistic Hedonism,† which takes the pleasure of others

* Best represented perhaps by Thomas Hobbes, though his materialism and individualism is more prominent than his hedonism.

† Represented in this country by William Godwin, Bentham, James Mill, J. S. Mill, and Professor Sidgwick in various degrees and in divers manners.

also into account. It is important to note the precise point in which this differs from the former doctrine. It does not differ in its account of what is ultimately desirable. It agrees that this is pleasure. It merely insists on the *extent* of the pleasure as an independent and by far the most important "dimension." This, it need hardly be pointed out, makes a vital difference; for whereas upon the former view his own pleasure counts to the individual as supreme, and that of others is only sought as tributary thereto, according to the form of the theory now under consideration, and familiar to every one under the more popular name of Utilitarianism, the claims of the individual sink into insignificance. "Everybody is to count for one, and nobody for more than one." The pleasure which is the standard of moral judgment is not the greatest pleasure of the individual, but the "greatest pleasure of the greatest number," calculated upon the basis of the equality of the claims of all.*

* As has been well pointed out in Green (*Proleg. to Ethics*, Book III., ch. iii., § 214), it is this democratic principle, and not the contention that the end is pleasure, which has made utilitarianism so effective as an instrument of legislative reform. How far the principle is consistent with the fact that individuals differ in capacity for pleasure, and that these differences would have to be taken into account in a distribution designed to produce the greatest sum total of happiness, however made up, may be questioned (see Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, p. 110, n. fin.; Mackenzie's *Introd. to Social Philosophy*, pp. 212 foll.; Montague, *op. cit.*, p. 40). The formula itself does not seem to occur in Bentham's writings, though Mill (*Utilitarianism*, p. 93) attributes it to him. With regard to the phrase "greatest happiness of the greatest number," commonly associated with Bentham, though he seems to have preferred "greatest happiness" alone, it is interesting to notice that it is traceable so far back as Hutcheson, the Scotch Intuitionalist (see Montague, *op. cit.*, p. 34 n.). The term Utilitarian is claimed

§ 48. Characteristic Difficulties in the several Forms of Hedonism.

A detailed criticism of the pleasure theory in its two chief forms is beyond the scope of the present handbook.* It must here be sufficient to refer to characteristic difficulties which attach to each.

(1) The stumbling-block in the way of the Egoistic Hedonist is the obvious outrage which is committed against the moral sentiments and benevolent impulses by the attempt to explain them as modifications of the selfish desire for pleasure. The attempt may be made to do so either directly, as by Hobbes and his followers,† who sought to resolve altruistic impulses, such as those of compassion and benevolence, into reflex forms of personal fear or hope; or indirectly, as by the later Hedonists,‡ who sought by means of the principle of

by J. S. Mill (*op. cit.*, p. 9) as his own discovery. It is not a particularly happy one. The word "utility" denotes merely the property of serving some end; it conveys no information as to the nature of the end itself.

* Besides the authorities referred to (p. 103), the student will find exhaustive discussion of the Hedonistic hypothesis in Green's *Proleg. to Ethics*, Book III., chs. i. and iv.; Book IV., ch. iv.; Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, pp. 196 foll.; J. S. Mackenzie's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, pp. 202, 226; Dewey, *Psychology*, pp. 17 foll.—where the important distinction is made between "pleasure as the (only) object of desire" and "pleasure as criterion" of moral value; Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essays III. and VII.; Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Vol. II., p. 229.

† "Self-love," says La Rochefoucauld, "lingers with strange objects only as the bees with the flowers, in order to draw from them what it requires." Quoted by Höffding, *Outlines of Psychology*, Eng. Tr., p. 244.

‡ *E.g.*, Hartley and the Mills.

the Association of Ideas to explain how objects like liberty, the well-being of others, virtue in general, which at first are sought only on account of the personal pleasure or the exemption from pain which they secure, may afterwards, by a confusion of means and end, come to be pursued for their own sake. The difficulty of explaining altruistic conduct upon this basis has led the lineal descendants of this school to acknowledge, besides the egoistic, the altruistic impulse of sympathy as a co-ordinate principle of action.*

(2) The doctrine known as Utilitarianism, while escaping this, has difficulties of its own to contend with, the chief being to explain how, on the presupposition which it shares with the former view that his own pleasure is the only object that any one can desire, it is possible to desire the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The difficulty did not much trouble Bentham, the father of Utilitarianism, who airily explained the phenomenon of his own undoubted benevolence, by saying that he was a selfish man "whose selfishness happened to have taken the form of benevolence." In another passage he assigns their respective places to egoism and altruism in the characteristic saying that though "sympathy is very good for dessert, self-regard alone will serve for diet." His successor, J. S. Mill, found this a tougher knot. He tried to solve it by the well-known argument in the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*: "No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person . . . desires his

* The attempt made by evolutionary writers to explain egoistic and sympathetic feelings as developments from a common root (see, *e.g.*, Höffding, *op. cit.*, pp. 247 foll.) does not, of course, alter their qualitative distinctness in their fully developed forms.

own happiness. . . . Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness therefore a good to the aggregate of all persons." This is as though one were to argue (to borrow Carlyle's famous comparison), that because each pig desires for himself the greatest amount of a limited quantity of pigs' wash, each necessarily desires the greatest quantity for every other or for all.* Latter-day utilitarians, who are naturally dissatisfied with such an argument, prefer to renounce the dogma that personal pleasure is the one thing desired, and so are free to maintain, as some do,† that we ought to desire universal happiness because of its reasonableness. But as "reason" also informs us that we ought to desire our own, and the constitution of the world provides no guarantee that these two will always coincide, we have a choice between an ultimate ethical dualism or an appeal to another world to redress the failures of the present. The followers of the late Professor Sidgwick waver between these two alternatives.‡

§ 49. Elements of Value in Pleasure Theory.

While these objections seem fatal to the several forms which the theory has taken, it ought not to be forgotten that this view of the end has usually had to maintain itself

* On this the student may consult any book on logic under head "Fallacy of Composition," along with Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 103 foll.; Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, ch. vi., § 9.

† *E.g.*, Professor Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., ch. xiii.

‡ For further criticism of this view which, as opposed to the older or psychological form of the doctrine, has been called "ethical hedonism," see Green's *Prolog. to Ethics*, Bk. IV., ch. iv., § 364 foll.; Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-117; Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, ch. vi., §§ 6 foll. If we fairly face the question in the text we are necessarily led to a conception of the self as essentially *rational*. But this annihilates the presupposition upon which the hedonistic theory rests.

against equally one-sided theories, and is thus not without value as a protest against their falsehood. Thus it has always been opposed to the theory, to be dealt with in the next chapter, which invests mere resistance to desire with peculiar merit, and which tends to emphasise the ascetic or negative element in the moral life at the expense of its positive side as a form, not of self-denial, but of self-fulfilment or self-realisation. Similarly, in the field of law and politics, the service of the founders of utilitarianism at the beginning of the present century to legal and political reform is inestimable. It may indeed be questioned* how far Bentham, Godwin, Place, Grote, Austin, J. S. Mill, were inspired by the hedonistic, as opposed to what might be called the democratic, elements in their theory. But it is certain that, at a time when other theories by their conservatism and mysticism seemed to favour the maintenance of established abuses, the hedonistic writers brought forward an apparently simple and intelligible standard by which the value of laws and institutions might be estimated.

These merits go far to explain the attraction which the theory has exercised, and even now exercises for some of the best minds of the time, and might still be expected to outweigh the paradoxes already indicated were it not that it can be demonstrated to rest on assumptions which recent psychology has shown to be no longer tenable.

§ 50. Fundamental Error of the Theory based on Inadequate Analysis of Desire.

With one of these we are already familiar, but it is so fundamental as to deserve restatement. The end

* See above, p. 115 n.

which is the standard of value in conduct is supposed to be given immediately. It is the end, not only of man, but of all sentient creation. "All sentient beings," it is said, "desire pleasure by a law of their nature." The difference between rational and non-rational beings lies not in the character of the object of desire, but in the relative degree in which they possess the capacity for its enjoyment and apprehend the means of its attainment. Similarly, among beings nominally rational, differences consist in their relative power of appreciating the means whereby the greatest sum-total of pleasure may be realised. In other words, the function of reason is that of directing and regulating action in view of an end which is immediately given by feeling. Reason gives no end: it merely prescribes the means to the attainment of one which, on appearing upon the stage, it finds already universal and inevitable. Accordingly, the rationality or value of conduct has to be judged, not by the character of its end or object, but by its suitability as a means towards the realisation of that which alone has value, viz., agreeable consciousness or pleasure.

But in all this there is a fundamental misconception as to the relation of thought or reason to desire, which our analysis of the latter has already furnished us with the means of correcting. We have already seen that the *idea* of the object, as a form of fulfilment of the self, is an essential element in all that is properly called desire. This means that reason does not simply *accept* the object given it by a natural impulse or propensity, and set about devising means for its realisation. It would be truer to say that it *makes* the object, not only because there can be no object of desire without it, but because the nature

of the self, as we have seen, passes over into and reflects itself in the object.

Comparing this conclusion with the view under consideration, we see (1) that an "object of desire" can only exist for a being which thinks and reasons as well as feels, and that it is an abuse of language to say, as the hedonist has done from time immemorial,* that all sentient beings desire pleasure. (2) The rationality or value of conduct for us as human cannot be measured by the extent to which it tends to realise an object given irrespective of the self to which it is an object. The question is how far an object which, *ex hypothesi*, is a mere state of feeling can satisfy a being who in his own nature must be taken to be more than feeling. Merely to put this question suggests a suspicion of the unsatisfactoriness of the hedonistic answer. We saw at the outset that this theory was based upon the assumption that the self was primarily and essentially feeling. When this is shown to be groundless; when, in the mental phenomenon with which we have in ethics primarily to deal, viz., human desire, it is seen that a self is at work which is more than feeling, we may reasonably doubt whether it is possible to hold that it can obtain the fulfilment which is its deepest need in what is admittedly a mere form of feeling.

§ 51. Is Pleasure the only Motive? Restatement of Hedonistic Argument.

The above argument, however, might be acquiesced in without yet shaking the reader's conviction that pleasure is the only motive of action. Thus after taking the

* See Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book X., ch. ii.

utmost pains to make the above objections plain, I have frequently been met with the following reply: "All you say may be very true, but you fail to convince me that it is possible for me to act from any other motive than desire for my own pleasure. Even when I flatter myself that I have at last succeeded in performing a really self-denying and disinterested action, closer inspection invariably reveals to me that I have only done it because I pleased, or because it pleased me so to do. Even extreme cases of so-called self-sacrifice—as, for instance, that of the martyr—are seen on further scrutiny to be only subtler or more eccentric forms of self-pleasing. It is not necessary to maintain that, in such a case, the object is any form of sensuous pleasure, either in this world or the next. All that is meant is, that the course of action which the martyr chooses must, in some way incomprehensible to ordinary mortals, have pleased him —is in fact only his peculiar way of 'enjoying himself.' In this respect saint and sinner, martyr and pleasure-seeker, are alike: the only reason each can ultimately give for preferring one form of life to another is, that it gives him greater pleasure."

This argument might be met by pointing out that it rests on an ambiguity in the English word "please." "It pleases me to do a thing" may mean either "It gives me pleasure to do it," or simply "I choose to do it"—a distinction * which may be clearly indicated by translating these phrases into their corresponding Latin equivalents, *amœnum est* and *placet*, which gives respectively the noun-adjectives *amœna* = things that give pleasure, and *placita* = things chosen or resolved upon. If in the above contention the word "please" is used in the

* On which see Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, Book I., ch. iv.

latter sense; if in saying that I always do what I please, or what pleases me, I simply mean I always act because I choose to act, the statement cannot indeed be said to be false; it is only meaningless. It is equivalent to saying, I always choose because I choose. With all the appearance of assigning a reason, the sentence assigns no reason at all. If, on the other hand, it be meant that I always act because the action will please me, or because of the pleasure it will give, the statement is comprehensible indeed, but it is precisely that against which the argument of the last few sections has been directed.

But this mode of meeting the objection might only lead an opponent to a more careful statement of it. "It is obvious, of course," he will say, "that the statements 'It will give me pleasure' and 'I choose' have come to be regarded as different, but the point of my contention is that this is a superficial distinction. On a closer scrutiny, 'to choose' is seen to be the same thing as 'to find pleasure in,' which in turn merely means 'to hope for pleasure from.' Or, putting choice aside—as being only determination by the strongest desire, *i.e.* (according to my interpretation), by the greatest pleasure, where several courses present themselves—and confining ourselves to desire, what I contend is, that to find the idea of a thing pleasant, and to desire it, are one and the same, and that to say so is merely another way of saying that the only object of desire is pleasure."

§ 52. Met by Distinction between "Pleasures in Idea," and "Idea of Pleasure."

To meet this form of the objection, it is necessary to recall to mind all that has already been said as

to the relation of pleasure to desire. In treating of the phenomenon of desire, we dwelt upon the relation to it of feeling in general. We saw that feeling enters into it as one of its constituent elements Thus there is in all desire a feeling of pain in being without the object of desire. But besides this pain, and complementary to it as its correlative, there is the pleasure which the idea of the object gives us. This pleasure is known in ordinary language as "interest"—"the interest which the object excites." Strictly defined, it is the feeling of the value which the object has for the self.*

It may be admitted that there is a sense in which this feeling may be said to move to action.† We may even go further, and admit for argument's sake—though I think the statement seriously misleading—that the idea of the course of action chosen, *e.g.*, by the martyr, gives him greater pleasure than the idea of any other possible course. But to make this admission is one thing, to contend that in choosing that course he chooses his own pleasure, or is moved by the desire for pleasure, is quite another. Indeed, the one contention is exclusive of the other. If the pleasure that moves us be excited by the idea of an act, it cannot at one and the same moment be excited by the idea of a pleasure. The idea of pleasure may of course be that which gives us pleasure: pleasure may be the object of desire. But in that case the pleasure which moves (if it be pleasure which moves)

* Mr. Bradley defines pleasure generally as "the feeling of self-realisedness" or "affirmative self-feeling" (*Ethical Studies*, p. 234). As an element in desire, it might be defined as the feeling of *anticipated* self-realisedness, or the feeling of the congruity of the object with the needs, natural or acquired, of the self.

† See p. 60 above.

is different from the pleasure aimed at; nor is the contention that we are always moved by the pleasure of the idea before the mind equivalent to maintaining that there can be no motive save desire for pleasure.

The contention of these sections is that the latter is a dogma which is not only inadequate to explain the phenomena of moral judgment, but is in contradiction to the phenomena of ordinary desire.

§ 53. Action not always in the Line of the Greatest Pleasure.

It only remains to point out that it is merely a further dogma to contend that action is always in the line of the greatest pleasure. It is true (and no truth is more important for a right theory of education) that action takes place normally in the line of *the things we feel most strongly about*—if we like to say so, the things the thought of which is the source of the deepest pleasure to us. But it is one of the paradoxes of human life that the things that we feel most strongly about do not always excite in us the vividest momentary feeling. When their place, moreover, is thus usurped by other objects it is not necessarily, nor I think commonly, pleasure that usurps it, but some object which, owing to the circumstances of the moment, internal or external, is invested with exceptional motive power.*

* On the practical question of "pleasure-seeking" see below, Appendix B.

CHAPTER II.

THE END AS SELF-CONQUEST.

§ 54. Opposite Theory to Foregoing.

In the last chapter we examined the theory which is founded on the conception of the self as primarily and essentially a subject of feeling. In this chapter we have to consider the doctrine which in many respects stands in direct antithesis to it. It is founded on the view that the self as rational has a being independent of feeling and desire. On this theory the end is to give effect to the requirements of the rational, as the inner and true, being of a man. Pleasure, so far from being the end, is for the most part its enemy. It may be that there are pleasures which are good, or at least harmless, but no action which has pleasure for a motive can be truly human or good. In order to be good, an act must be done out of reverence for the reason which enjoins it, and without regard to the consequences to the sentient self, whether one's own or another's. As opposed to the theory that the end is pleasure for pleasure's sake, this theory has aptly been called the theory of duty for duty's sake.*

* Hence it has been said to be "not so much an explicit theory of the end or ideal as a vindication of the absoluteness of moral law

A glance at some of the leading forms it has taken will enable the student to realise the place it has occupied in ethical thought.

§ 55. Historical Forms of Theory.—Cynicism

Like Hedonism, it has taken various forms, reappearing from age to age and gaining importance from the emphasis it has given to the element in human life which its rival ignored. Thus when the Socratic circle broke up into what are known as the minor Socratic schools, and the Cyrenaics seized on the more attractive and utilitarian side of the teaching of the master, they were opposed by the Cynics, who seized on that side of his doctrine and example which pointed to self-conquest and independence of passion as the mark of the philosopher. The end, according to the Cynics, was virtue. Virtue was sufficient for happiness. Other things might be an aid; none were necessary; least of all pleasure. "I would rather be mad than feel pleasure," was a saying of the founder. It was the mark of the god to be in need of nothing. In this form the doctrine was too negative and too much out of touch both with the spirit of Greek life as a whole and with the wants of the particular generation to take any deep hold of men of culture, with the result that it soon ran into extravagance and is chiefly interesting as an anticipation of the deeper form which Stoicism was soon to give it.*

or obligation, of the category of duty as the supreme ethical category" (J. Seth, *Ethical Principles*, p. 52, whose term, "rigoristic," borrowed from Kant, well expresses its spirit). On the contrast between this theory and the hedonistic, see Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Essays III. and IV.; Dewey, *Outlines*, etc., pp. 78 foll.

* The founder of the school was Antisthenes, but it is represented in popular thought by Diogenes, who seems to have combined

§ 56. Stoicism.

As Epicureanism was a deepened form of Cyrenaicism, so Stoicism was of Cynicism. It agreed with it in holding that virtue was the chief good in life. But virtue was conceived more positively as life in harmony both with itself and with nature, which in turn was conceived of as a universal principle of law and order instead of the mere negation of whatever was established and conventional. To maintain this doctrine was clearly the work of thought, and Stoicism was further differentiated from its predecessor by the strenuousness with which it sought through science and philosophy to lay a sure foundation for the ethical life. If the fruit was ethics, the earth and the trees were physical science, and the guarding palisade was logic. In a still further respect Stoicism struck the note that remained characteristic of the theory in its more dignified form. Among the exaggerations of Cynicism none was more marked than its individualism. From the dictum that for the "wise man nothing was strange or out of the way" there was but a step to the doctrine that nothing was binding. The Stoic, on the other hand, interpreting wisdom as harmony with the deeper spirit of nature,

in his own person all that was attractive and all that was repulsive in its tenets. To hold that virtue is the only good is on the way to holding that everything else is contemptible in comparison; and if all is dross, what visible line is there between the objects of vulgar desire and the refinements of civilisation? Hence a doctrine that began in a protest against naturalism tended to sink back into it again. Besides the books mentioned on p. 103, the student may be referred, both for this and for Stoicism, to Ritter and Preller's excellent collection of authoritative passages, *Historia Philosophiæ Græcæ*, of which a good English translation is much needed.

was able to see in civic law and ordinance the earthly embodiment of the divine order, and to regard himself as one having a post assigned to him within it.*

§ 57. Kant.

In modern philosophy the theory has been worked out in the most striking form and with the greatest fulness of detail by Immanuel Kant.† It is even more difficult than in the case of Stoicism to condense in a few words what has rightly been called "one of the most impressive moral idealisms of all time."‡ The points round which interest centres are mainly these:

1. It is the characteristic of man to be self-determined —autonomous. "Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the *conception* of laws—that is, according to principles; in other words, to have a will."§ If it be said that there is a sense in which all sentient beings are self-determined, the answer is that they follow the lead of external stimuli of pain and pleasure, and are still in this sense heteronomous.

2. If man were pure reason there would be no conflict within him, and life would be *purely* autonomous; but he shares the life of sentient creation, and with it determination by pain and pleasure, whence arises the conflict between the self-given law of reason and the irrational other-given law of the sensitive life. The former, with its absolute uncompromising demands upon

* Besides the references on p. 103, see W. W. Capes, *Stoicism*.
† T. K. Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*.
‡ Professor J. Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
§ Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

an undivided allegiance, makes itself felt within us as a categorical or unconditional imperative. To be truly human and therefore truly good, the action must spring from reverence for this imperative without admixture of any lower motive.

3. Hence all idea of happiness must be purged away from it, for "happiness is not an ideal of reason, but of imagination."* With this must go also all regard to the consequences, of whatever kind. "An action done from a sense of duty derives its moral worth *not from the purpose* which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realisation of the object of the action, but merely upon the *principle of volition* by which the action has taken place without regard to any object of desire." †

4. While the principle of morality is thus purely formal, *i.e.*, is a requirement that the will shall be in a particular attitude of withdrawal from all that is material, yet it is not without reference to *a moral world*. Inasmuch as the principle is necessarily conceived of as one that holds for all rational beings, it carries with it the implication of a society of beings who have all in the same sense the possibility of autonomy. Of this power of free self-determination they can only be deprived by an action which, by its very nature, cannot really be *willed* by a being who can only will what is of universal application. In this way Kant arrived at the conception of the moral or spiritual world as a Society or, as he called it, a Kingdom of Ends, or of beings who are an end to themselves, in which each is at once subject as falling under the law and sovereign as giving it. The use he and his successor

* Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 36. † Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Fichte made of this ideal as the basis of religion does not here concern us. Its interest for ethics consists in the form which it leads Kant to give to the ultimate moral imperative: "*So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only.*"*

§ 58. Value of the Theory in that it recognises Right as distinct from Expediency.

It must be recognised at the outset that this theory is not open to the objection which common-sense morality has always brought against Hedonism, that it confounds the distinction between what is right and what is prudent. On the contrary, the theory before us stretches the distinction to the point of denying any relation between them. Opposed to the desires, which by their very nature are self-seeking, it is held that there is another principle of action which is radically distinct from and may determine us independently of them. The suggestions of desire may doubtless conflict with one another, and reason, in the sense of reflection, may be called upon to arbitrate between them. This regulation of conflicting desires in such a manner as to secure the sum-total of selfish advantage is known as prudence. But desire, as a whole, is maintained to be by its very nature in never-ceasing conflict with reason as such, and virtue consists in denying altogether the claim of the former to determine the action of the rational will. Right thus stands out clear from the taint of all prudential considerations. Let these once enter into the motive of an act, and its claim to moral rectitude is destroyed.

With this qualitative difference between prudence

* Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

and morality is connected the absoluteness with which ordinary moral consciousness invests the moral law. So long as good in general only differs in quantity from the particular goods which are the object of particular desires, it is difficult to see where an absolute "ought," or categorical imperative, can come in. The end in reference to which such an imperative has meaning must be a universal one, *i.e.*, one which it is reasonable to demand that all should pursue. It cannot be conditional on their "liking to." It is quite true that the Hedonist represents the greatest pleasure as a universal end, but then the form which the greatest pleasure takes to each individual is by its very nature particular. Granted that the so-called "middle axioms" of morality, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," etc., are generalisations from experience as to the mode best fitted on the average for realising this end, they have authority for the individual only on the hypothesis that there are no other modes, and that his idea of the greatest pleasure is the idea of the average man. Obedience to them can never be required unconditionally.* "You *ought* to do this" can have no meaning, as an unconditional command, to the consistent Hedonist. The rejoinder, "Yes, *provided* I recognise that action as a means to my greatest pleasure; but I don't," puts an end to the matter. But on the theory under discussion it is different. Reason is the same for all. Being that which is distinctive of man, it speaks in the name of his true or permanent self, as opposed to the transient phases of appetite and passion which he shares with

* Hence the tendency of the older Hedonist writers to represent the middle axioms as the invention of government. Virtue is "the interest of the stronger."

the lower animals. Its law accordingly is the law of liberty. To disobey reason is to renounce man's special birthright of freedom—the freedom that consists in submitting to a self-given law—and to fall under the dominion of the alien power of a merely natural inclination.* It is not therefore open to the individual to plead the peculiarities of his sentient nature in excuse for disregarding the imperatives of reason. These are binding upon him as a rational being. To deny their authority is to deny himself part or lot in the kingdom of humanity.

§ 59. Value of this View of Man's Nature in the History of Civilisation.

It is in virtue of this uncompromising attitude towards the lower life of desire that this theory, and the view of life founded upon it (in spite of their one-sidedness), have exercised so important an influence upon thought and life.

The theory that the essential element in man, or that to which he is called upon to give effect, is his reason, has usually risen into prominence in the history of civilised nations at periods when, owing to external misfortunes or the decay of national institutions, the world has offered little that could satisfy man's higher aspirations. This was notably so at the time of the rise of the Stoic philosophy, when, owing to the decay of free national life

* "We have a warfare to wage, and one truly in which there is no pause nor relaxation of effort. Above all we have to fight against pleasure, which has cast even strong spirits into chains. We aim at freedom, that is the prize for which we strive; but freedom means not to be in bondage to any object, to any constraint, to anything accidental."—SENECA.

among the Greeks, the individual found himself thrown back upon the resources of his own inner life for support to the sense of human dignity and freedom which could no longer be found in civil and political life. It was even more conspicuously so during the early ages of the Roman Empire, when in a rich and highly cultured society "all men were slaves but one." To have kept alive under such circumstances the heroic view of life, as Stoicism did, was no small service to humanity.

But there are other and more definitely practical services directly traceable to this view of life. By laying stress on what was common to all mankind, viz., his rationality, instead of on what was particular, viz., his circumstances and individual capacities, this theory laid the foundations of a new view of the relations of men to one another. It was in the Stoic schools that the idea of the brotherhood of man, as opposed to the partnership of citizens, first took root, and was made the basis of the denial of the distinction between slave and free.* "The universal need of the period," writes Pfleiderer, in tracing the influence of these ideas upon Christianity, "awoke the altruistic feelings of mutual dependence and obligation." It might be said, indeed, that it was to Christianity itself and not to Stoicism that the general acceptance of this idea was due. This is doubtless true;† but that the early Christians conceived it in a mystic and emotional, rather than a reflective and practical form, is seen in the fact that slavery as a human institution rouses no protest in the first writers.

But his rational nature is not only that which unites

* The first protest against the institution of slavery seems to have come from the Cynics. See Newman's *Politics of Aristotle*, Introd. p. 140.

† See pp. 268, 269.

man to man: it is also that which gives to each his separate dignity as a man, and in emphasising this element also Stoicism laid the foundations of the conception of human personality, and thus provided, for the first time, a secure basis for a consistent theory of legal rights. Hence it was that a doctrine, which as a principle of morals has too often been stark and barren, blossomed in the field of politics under the fostering care of Stoic thinkers into the great system of rights and obligations known as Roman Law.

If in the modern world the idea underlying this philosophy seems to have been less operative, this is doubtless due in part to the fact that, as Professor Dewey hints, its direct influence has been national rather than universal,* but also in part to the discovery at the right moment in the prevalent utilitarian philosophy of working substitutes for it. Yet we ought not to forget the indirect influence it exercised in the revolutionary movement, of which Höffding remarks that "the proclamation of the 'Rights of Man' issues from the Kantian assumption, and the sting of the social question arises from the fact that the assumption has not been fulfilled." † Even in England, while the legal and political reforms of the early part of the nineteenth century may seem to have been inspired by utilitarian ideas, it may well be doubted whether the underlying principle of the social movement which began towards the middle of the century, and is the most characteristic feature of the present time, does not owe more to the Kantian principle

* He points to the influence that the philosophy of Kant has had in Germany as affording a principle of legal reform, and giving stability to the political system of that country.

† *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 164 (Eng. Tr.).

of the sacredness of humanity in each than to the Benthamite dictum that "each was to count as one, and nobody as more than one."

§ 60. **Place of Self-conquest as a Practical Principle.**

The theory that lays the emphasis upon duty, as opposed to inclination or mere habit, contains, moreover, an important element of truth, which naturalistic theories of the end of action have always tended to overlook. For it is undoubtedly true that at a certain stage in moral development, both in the individual and in the race, the negative or ascetic element is the prominent one. All moral progress consists in subordination of lower to higher impulses, and at a certain stage it may well appear more important to conquer the lower than to give effect to the higher. How far it is possible to effect this conquest without appeal to more positive principles of action—how far, for instance, sensual impulses can be made to yield before the abstract announcements of reason that they are "wrong," without appeal to the higher interests and affections—is a question for the educator. What is certain is, that morality begins in self-restraint and self-denial, and that, as we shall shortly see, it is impossible to conceive of circumstances in which this negative element will be totally absent from it. Whatever we are to say of the desire for pleasure, it is certain that readiness to suffer pain is an inexpugnable element * in all virtue, and that there is more danger for the individual in indulging the former than in over-cultivating the latter.†

* See below, p. 144.

† This is clearly Professor William James's view, who, in an eloquent passage, recommends his reader to "be systematically

§ 61. Criticism of Theory

The defect of the ascetic theory is not that it lays emphasis on the negative and formal aspects of morality, but that it treats these aspects as final. (1) *Self-realisation cannot consist in mere resistance to the suggestions of desire.* If it did, the satisfaction of one element in human nature would mean the destruction of another; the realisation of reason would mean the annihilation of feeling and desire. Seeing, moreover, that virtue consists in free determination by reason, and reason is not otherwise definable on this theory save as the antithesis of desire, the virtuous man, so far from being independent of desire, would be dependent on its active opposition for the opportunity of realising himself in conflict with it. Virtue, in fact, lives in the life of its antagonist. Final and complete victory over it would involve its own destruction along with the destruction of desire.* This is the explanation of the

ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it," justifying it on the ground that "asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things, will stand like a tower when everything rocks round him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast."—*Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I., p. 126. *Cp.* the interesting remarks on his own education in Mill's *Autobiography*, pp. 52 foll., *Comte and Positivism*, p. 146 (second edition). On the subject of the paragraph generally, *cp.* Dewey, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 155, 156.

* This one-sidedness might be further illustrated from the dependence of the ascetic for the *feeling* or *sense* of self-realisation upon the consciousness of what he is *not* rather than of what he is, *i.e.*, upon the contrast between himself and others. Hence, that which

failure which has attended all attempts to organise a practical scheme of life upon the basis of this theory. In the absence of an inspiring positive ideal of human life, those who have been in earnest about the matter have alternately been occupied with the vain attempt to cancel in themselves all healthy human interests, and (failing, as they were bound to do, to realise this ideal) with counselling * that retirement from the conflict which death alone can offer. The less earnest spirits to whom this ideal has been offered have tended, on the other hand, to fall back, with true cynical indifference, upon the lower forms of sensual life.†

(2) *Self-realisation cannot consist in merely formal self-consistency.* The defect inherent in the hedonistic theory was, as we saw, that it failed to afford any secure foundation for the distinction between right and wrong. Life was full of matter as an egg is full of meat, but there was no organising principle to give it form and definite moral value. The objection to the opposite theory may be said to be the reverse of this: it brings life into bondage to the mere form of duty, and this is to rob it of all that makes it interesting and desirable. If no

in ordinary cases is mere approval of conscience is apt to turn in him into an odious species of spiritual pride. When Antisthenes called Socrates's attention to his rags he received the reply that his pride was visible through the holes in his cloak.

Timon. "Thou art proud, Apemantus."

Apem. "Of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon."

There is, in fact, a "paradox" of asceticism as well as of Hedonism: to seek independence directly is the best way not to find it.

* As did the Roman Stoics. "To the shipman on this stormy sea there beckons but one harbour of safety, namely, death."—Seneca.

† As was illustrated by the history of the Cynics (see Zeller's *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*) and the mediæval monasteries.

act is morally right which is done because we *desire* to do it, then, not only because I am virtuous am I to have no more cakes and ale, but a stain is cast on all conduct which in the common intercourse of life springs spontaneously from the ordinary affections of love and pity, hope and fear.

Granted that a man must fail to do his duty who looks at everything from the point of view of personal advantage, it is an equal outrage upon life to try to bring every action in which there is a right and a wrong under the light of a formal principle and schedule it as a duty. As Professor Dewey puts it, "Between the merchant who is honest in his weights and fixed in his prices merely because he calculates that such a course is to his own advantage, and the merchant (if such a person could exist) who should never sell a spool of thread or a paper of pins without having first reminded himself that his ultimate motive for so doing was respect for the law of duty, there is the ordinary merchant who is honest because he has the desires characteristic of an honest man." *

* *Ethics*, p. 349. Writers who sought to develop this theory into a complete system of duty applicable to ordinary human life could only do so by introducing distinctions and additions which it was impossible to justify to their own logic. Thus Kant, who was far too great a philosopher to let mere logical consistency bar him from the consideration of the rich positive content of life, sought salvation in the distinction between *perfection*, which it is the duty of each to promote in himself, and *happiness*, which is the only legitimate object in the case of others, and again in the case of perfection between the cultivation of his natural capacities "in order that he may be worthy of the humanity that dwells in him," and the cultivation of his will "up to the purest virtuous disposition." Where we should expect him to justify this distinction by reducing intellectual cultivation to the place of a means to moral,

The source of those two opposite errors is the same. It is doubtless true that in the one case reason gives no end at all, being confined to the function of prescribing the means for realising the end set by the sentient nature, while in the other case it provides indeed an end, yet in denying desire it denies the only means by which the ideal end can ever pass into actuality. But while the view before us presents this contrast with the preceding one in regard to the function it assigns to thought or reason, it is in fundamental agreement with it in holding that reason stands outside the object of desire, and is only externally related to it. On the one theory, as on the other, the object is conceived of as given by the appetitive or purely irrational part of our nature: the only object of desire is pleasure, and in desiring pleasure man is determined by his sentient or appetitive nature alone.

§ 62. The Meaning and Place of Duty in the Moral Life.

To set these defects of the theory in their proper light it is only necessary to bring them into connection with what has already been said as to the nature and origin of moral sense in general from which the sense

he just seems to stop short (Abbott, p. 297), perhaps because it would be too like treating one element of humanity not as an end in itself, but "as a means only" to another. By a similar inconsistency from the side of feeling, while denying that *pleasantness* can be associated with the idea of duty, Kant saves himself from formalism by conceiving of the law of reason, on the one hand, as an object of supreme *interest* stimulating to action by the feeling of reverence and of cheerfulness of heart in the performance of one's duty, on the other, as a mark of the genuineness of the virtuous disposition (*cf.* 330 *n.*). On Kantian Ethics see Caird's *Kant*, Vol. II., esp. pp. 202-9, 226-8; Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, 57-70; Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, 346 foll., 241 foll.

of duty only differs in that it attaches definitely and with full consciousness to something which has to be done or to be left undone by the individual himself.

Under what circumstances, we may ask, does the feeling of constraint, which is the most obvious feature of the sense of duty, arise? It clearly would not arise in a being without inclinations that require to be constrained. If the mere thought of the reasonable action were sufficient to secure its execution unopposed by contrary inclinations, or by the inertia of habit, while there might be "duties" to perform there would be no sense of effort in the performance, or of being in any way constrained by them. *Vice versâ*, if we could conceive of the life of a being which is all inclination, natural or acquired, while again there might be action, as there is in the lower animals, which we judge to be purposive and in a sense reasonable (perhaps even conceive of as "dutiful"), yet in the creature itself there would be no sense of constraint from a right and a reasonable which was other than inclination.* The sense of duty can only rise in a being, neither a god nor a beast, of the type familiar to ourselves, which gets its motor force and steerage way from instinct and habit, and yet knows itself to be constantly liable to be called upon to give effect to ideas which involve a check upon the strongest instincts and the most inveterate habits. What gives the situation the touch of paradox, which was noticed by Plato† in the earliest analysis of it that we have as characteristic of it, is that these ideas speak not from the outside, but from a deeper level of the being

* This does not prejudge the question of the rudiments of moral sense, and sense of duty in the higher animals.

† *Republic*, IV., 443*a*.

of the self. To feel ourselves constrained by another physically or morally may be the beginning of a sense of duty, but it is an entirely different fact.

So far the rigorist would follow us. It is just this fact of the presence of a "law of the mind" warring against the "law of the members" on which he has seized. What we have next to notice is that the first does not come merely from within. It does not rise out of the void of the "mind," but represents some definite feature of a man's existing world, social or individual. The *sense* of duty rises in connection with some particular "duty," something the doing of which is implied in the fact, not of his *thinking* of an abstract law, but of his *being* a concrete person. Duty, in fact, is never duty in the abstract, but always duty to *something*, and this something we shall find always to be some definite object of human interest (family, business, self-culture, or what not), which is threatened by the uncontrolled indulgence of an inclination or persistence in a habit. On the other hand, neither are our inclinations and habits merely external: the law of the members is not simply the negation of the law of the mind. What marks the life of an animal, as we have seen, is not the absence of law, but the unconsciousness of the harmony into which instincts and inclinations have been brought with the law of its being. In man it is true that the harmony has been broken, but the vestiges of his ancestral psychical organisation remain just as truly as the vestiges of his physical. While the break in the harmony is the basis of the possibility of vice, the vestiges of it constitute the natural basis of man's highest virtues. In this sense, as Aristotle saw, there is a natural modesty, a natural kindliness, a natural

justice, apart from which it is difficult to conceive how human life could ever be moralised at all.

Both of these truths the doctrine of "duty for duty's sake" has missed. It conceives of duty as something both content and motive of which are supplied *a priori* by the reason itself. It is true (and it is a truth for the proper emphasis of which we are largely indebted to this school) that to be moral in the proper sense the dutiful action must be my own, that I must *choose* to do it. But this does not mean it is one whose form I create. On the contrary, I could not make the form my own unless it were there to make; it could not be my duty unless it came to me from some other source and with other credentials than those of my own mind or reason. On the other hand, by denying any place in the moral life to inclination, besides rendering it inconceivable how moral education could even begin, the doctrine commits itself to the absurdity of maintaining that no action is good which partakes of the spontaneity of natural instinct. We shall hereafter have occasion to criticise the ideal of a world from which the sense of duty is eliminated. No less self-contradictory and no less forbidding is the ideal of a world where nothing is worthily done unless it is something we dislike to do. The former involves the absence of any new calls upon us from an expanding ideal of what social and individual life may be that could come into collision with already formed habits and sentiments; the latter involves the absence of any secure basis of habit and sentiment which can give us a sense of being at home in our existing moral world and furnish the starting-point in the endeavour to remould it to a better.

CHAPTER III.

EVOLUTIONARY HEDONISM.

§ 63. Utilitarianism and Evolution.

Besides the empirical form which we have examined in a previous chapter, the utilitarian theory, after being brought into alliance with the doctrine of biological evolution, has been restated by some of the leading exponents of Darwinism, chiefly by Herbert Spencer, in what is claimed to be a more scientific form. In proceeding to consider this reinterpretation of the theory it is important to observe the precise point of divergence. The objections urged against the latter do not concern the nature of the end, or that which, in the last resort, is the standard of value in moral judgments. This is still the same. "No school," says Spencer, "can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling, called by whatever name, gratification, enjoyment, happiness. Pleasure, somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an inexpugnable element in the conception."* But while this is so, the pre-

* *Data of Ethics*, § 15. *Cp.* Appendix, p. 307 (5th ed.). In the same sense Sir Leslie Stephen, another representative of this point of view, appeals to "Hume, Bentham, the Mills, G. H. Lewes,

suppositions on which the older form of utilitarianism rested, and the method which it employed, are held to have been undermined and superannuated by the advance of biological science.

(1) The writers who founded and developed utilitarianism, in its earlier form, started from a conception of the relation of the individual to his social environment which, in view of the results now established, is quite untenable. They regard society as an aggregate of individuals, mechanically cohering, like atoms or molecules in inorganic matter. The weakness of this point of view became obvious when the question was asked how the atoms or molecules of which society, on this theory, consists came together at all. It was to meet this question that recourse was had by earlier writers to the myth of the "Social Contract," by the later to a natural "sympathy" between individuals. (2) Analogous to this conception of society as an aggregate of homogeneous units, we have the conception of fixed and equal "lots" of happiness. "We must conceive of happiness" (according to this theory) "as a kind of emotional currency, capable of being calculated and distributed in 'lots,' which have a certain definite value independently of any special taste of the individual. Pains and pleasures can be handed about like pieces of money, and we have simply to calculate how to gain a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain."* (3) Utilitarianism looked at society as static. The atoms are relatively constant. It is true that they vary

and Mr. Herbert Spencer, as "his own school" (*Science of Ethics*, Preface, p. vii.).

* Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*, p. 360. *Cp.* Spencer's criticism of the Benthamite formula, *op. cit.*, pp. 220 foll.

according to the circumstances of birth and education; but these variations are, as it were, accidental and individual. In the aggregate, they remain the same. Accordingly the happiness or pleasure, to cause and distribute which so as to secure the greatest amount to the greatest number is the moral end, is conceived of as relative only to the capacities of individuals statically considered. Its main features are fixed by the constitution of human nature as at present empirically known to us.*

§ 64. The Organic View of Human Society corrects these Errors.

(1) For the "atomic theory" of human nature and happiness, anthropology has substituted the organic. Go back, it teaches, as far as you will, in the history of the race or of the individual, you never come to anything that in any degree corresponds to the "individual" of the older theories. We never know man but as a member of some kind of society. He not only exists in a society, but is what he is in virtue of his relation to it. The connection between the individual and society is not something external and mechanical, but internal and

* It must not be supposed that all the older school of Utilitarians are equally responsible for these errors any more than its critics are equally free from them. J. S. Mill is clearly conscious of some of these defects in the earlier doctrine, and points them out with admirable lucidity in his famous essay on Bentham (*Essays and Dissertations*, Vol. I.). Here, as in other parts of his philosophy, the great interest that attaches to Mill's writings is due to the fact that he has outgrown formulæ with which, yet, he cannot make up his mind to part. On the other hand, Spencer often appears to part nominally with formulæ which he elsewhere shows he has not really outgrown. See next note.

organic. All that makes him what he is, all his powers of mind and body, are inherited, *i.e.*, come to him from a previous state of society. The instincts and desires which are the springs of his actions presuppose some sort of organised society of family and tribe as the field of their satisfaction. The education which he receives is only possible by means of such social institutions as language, the family, the school, the workshop. The prizes he wins in battle, the property he acquires in trade, can only be secured to him in virtue of some form of social law and social justice, however rudimentary. In a word, his life takes its form at every point from the relation in which he stands to his social environment.

All this is expressed in the scientific doctrine which has superseded the myth of the social contract as the ground of explanation of the phenomena of morals and politics.* "A full perception of the truth," says Leslie Stephen, "that society is not a mere aggregate, but an organic growth,—that it forms a whole the laws of whose growth can be studied apart from those of the individual atom,—supplies the most characteristic postulate of modern speculation." "Society, in fact, is a structure which by its nature implies a certain fixity in the dis-

* I speak in the text as though scientific writers had an equal hold of the notion that society is an organism, and expounded it with equal insight. As a matter of fact, a history of the doctrine would show that writers greatly differ in these respects. Spencer, who might be said to have been the founder of it, holds it with a feeble grasp (see D. G. Ritchie's criticisms, *Principles of State Interference*, I. and II.), and expounds it (*Essays*, Vol. I.), in a perfunctory way, as though it were an interesting "analogy," or metaphor. On the other hand, Stephen holds to it tenaciously as a central ethical principle.

tribution and relations of classes. Each man is found with a certain part of the joint framework, which is made of flesh and blood instead of bricks or timber, but which is not the less truly a persistent structure." *

(2) But society is not only an organism in the sense that the form of the individual's life is determined by his relation to the whole, as the various members are by their relation to the body,† but in the sense that, like other organisms, it grows and develops by reaction upon its environment. This growth is a simultaneous process of differentiation and integration, the structure acquiring greater complexity, and the individuals becoming more dependent upon one another. The end of the process is expressed in various ways as "increase," "development," "greatest totality," of life. "Evolution," says Mr. Spencer, "reaches its limit when individual life is the greatest, both in length and *breadth*."

Moreover, the law of social evolution is the law of evolution in other fields: that society survives which, owing to the constitution of its parts and members, and their faithfulness in the discharge of their individual functions, is best adapted to its environment. It is the pressure of the environment (*e.g.*, of one tribe upon another in the struggle for existence) which explains the survival of those communities in which conduct is best adapted to the end of social preservation, *i.e.*, furthers the health and strength of the tribe or nation. Hence, "social evolution means the evolution of a strong social

* *Science of Ethics*, pp. 29, 31.

† "We might as well regard the members of our own body as animals," says Professor James Ward, "as suppose man is man apart from humanity."

tissue]; the best type is the type implied by the strongest tissue." *

(3) When these results are applied to the theory of pleasure, and of moral judgment founded upon it, they are seen to imply important consequences. Pleasure is seen to depend, not upon the constitution of the individual considered as an isolated atom, but upon the "organic balance" of the individual's own instincts, as this is determined by his relations to society. "Pleasure is not a separate thing, independently of his special organisation. Each instinct, for example, must have its turn, and their respective provinces must be determined by the general organic balance. We may undoubtedly point out that certain modes of conduct produce pain, and others pleasure; and this is a *primâ facie* reason, at least, for avoiding one and accepting the other. But, again, some pains imply a remedial process, while others imply disease; and the conduct which increases them may therefore either be wise or foolish in the highest degree." †

Similarly, the fact of growth and evolution in the social organism involves a revision of our conception of happiness. Development implies the acquisition of new instincts and desires. Hence the happiness (resulting from the satisfaction of desires) which satisfies at one stage ceases to satisfy at another. "Happiness itself changes as the society develops, and we cannot compare the two societies at different stages, as if they were

* Stephen prefers "social tissue" to "social organism," because a nation has not the unity of the *higher organisms*. It is limited by external circumstances, not, like them, by internal constitution. See *op. cit.*, ch. iii., § 31.

† *Science of Ethics*, p. 365.

more or less efficient machines for obtaining an identical product."

§ 65. Involves a Restatement of the Nature of Moral Law.

With this criticism of the outworks of Utilitarianism goes the necessity of a revision of its central doctrine of the nature of moral law as an empirical generalisation as to the best means of producing the greatest sum-total of happiness. If the structure of society at any time has to be interpreted, like that of other organisms, in the light of the struggle for existence, and moral law in the light of social structure, it is clearly on its "survival," not its "hedonic" value, that the authority of the latter rests.

"Morality," says Stephen, "is the definition of some of the most important qualities of the social organism." "The moral law defines a property of the social tissue."* The imperatives, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," receive their justification, not from the happiness to ourselves and others that may be shown by appeal to experience to result from obeying them (this may or may not be so demonstrable), but from their relation to the vitality and efficiency of the organism. "This represents the real difference between the utilitarian and the evolutionist criterion. The one lays down as a criterion the happiness, the other the health, of the society."

Yet, as said at the outset, these two are not really opposed. The health of society is only valuable as the condition of its happiness. The difference between evolutionary ethics and Hedonism is not in the ultimate end they severally recommend, but in the proximate one.

* *Science of Ethics*, pp. 148, 168.

It does not concern the object to be reached by man, but the method of reaching it. The end is happiness, but that is best attained by keeping it in the background, and fixing attention upon the conditions. "While I admit," says Spencer,* "that happiness is the ultimate end to be contemplated, I do not admit that it should be the proximate end. I conceive it to be the business of moral science to deduce from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of action necessarily tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness. Having done this, its deductions are to be recognised as laws of conduct, and are to be conformed to irrespective of a direct estimation of happiness or misery." Finally, as illustrations of the blunders into which the application of an empirical or direct method may lead us, Mr. Spencer has drawn up a formidable list of mistaken efforts at legislation for the greatest happiness of the greatest number within the past few decades.†

So far we have the criticism of the older utilitarians by their evolutionist successors. We have now to examine the value of the criticism, and the position which the critics have left to themselves.

§ 66. Importance of Theory of Evolution in the Field of Ethics.

In trying to estimate the value of this philosophy it is only just to acknowledge some of the gains that we owe more or less directly to it.

(1) *It shows the theories already criticised to be as*

* *Data of Ethics*, § 21.

† See *The Man* versus *The State*, pp. 7 foll. (8th ed.).

untenable from a biological as we have seen that they are from an ethical point of view. These theories in all their forms are individualistic, *i.e.*, the self whose satisfaction is the ethical end is conceived of as isolated, or at any rate as not essentially related to society. Thus the Cyrenaics, while urging the pleasures of social intercourse, took care to add that one should practise the art of living together "like a stranger." The Epicureans extolled in this respect friendship, the most subjective and accidental of all social bonds.* The same defect hardly needs illustration from modern Hedonism. In the older forms, as in Hobbes,† the self is one whose satisfaction might not only be attained independently of society, but is actually crossed in its completeness by the existence of society. In later Hedonism we have already seen the shifts to which its supporters are reduced to stretch their egoistic basis so as to cover the facts of ordinary morality and social life.

The same feature appears in all the forms of the opposite theory with which we made a passing acquaintance in discussing "duty for duty's sake." The Cynic and the Stoic aimed at being independent of the social, as of other instincts and desires, the former deliberately cultivating a form of unsociableness which has passed into a byword, the latter living in times when social and political life no longer offered scope for the higher aspirations of the soul, and men were forced to seek in the inner life for the peace that the world failed to give. Similarly the "world" with which the Christian ascetic waged war included the relationships of family, society, and state; and even to Kant, society is the

* See Erdmann's *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I., pp. 90, 185.

† Who starts from the axiom *homo homini lupus.*

field of the reign of interests hostile to true self-determination.*

On each and all of these theories, society is conceived of as consisting of a mechanical union of mutually repellent particles, each of which pursues an end to which the others stand at best as means, and only submits to the restraint of social law on the fuller life they might otherwise enjoy by reason of the greater general security to the interests of persons and property that it brings.

Amid much confusion, evolutionist writers have helped to bring home the truth that the "self," whose satisfaction upon these theories is in one form or another the end, is an abstraction. No attempt to define it in terms of its individual nature as only accidentally related to society can henceforth succeed.

(2) Just as the application of scientific ideas in the field of sociology makes the older forms, both of naturalistic and rationalist theories of the end, untenable, so *the application of the historic method to the theory of conscience, and the forms which morality takes in different countries and times, is the refutation of the older Intuitionalism.*† In view of the facts brought forward, it can no longer be even plausibly maintained

* Of course it is impossible to secure independence of society on these terms any more than of desire (see above, p. 137).

† Spencer professes to have *reconciled* scientific with intuitionalist ethics. "The evolution hypothesis enables us to reconcile opposed moral theories. . . . For . . . the doctrine of innate powers of moral perception becomes congruous with the utilitarian doctrine, when it is seen that preferences and aversions are rendered organic by inheritance of the effects of pleasurable and painful experiences in progenitors."—*Data of Ethics*, p. 124; see whole passage, with which *cp. Social Statics*, Introduction. This kind of reconciliation resembles the cynic's interpretation of that of the lion and the lamb in prophecy.

that the judgments of conscience are innate and underived principles, related to the circumstances only as the field in which effect is to be given to them. They are shown to be vitally related to the stage of development at which the society whose morality they represent has arrived, and to have had a history in time like all other forms of conscious life. The "relativity" of the standard will be the subject of a future chapter, and need not further detain us here. It is sufficient to notice that the recognition that moral ideas have had a history does not involve the theory that they are capable of a naturalistic *explanation*. The question of the origin of our moral judgments is one thing, the question of the ground of their validity is another.*

(3) *It brings home from a new side the true place of pleasure in the moral life.* We have already defined pleasure as the feeling of "self-realisedness." With this definition the theory which sees in it the sign of the adaptation of function to environment is in complete harmony. On the other hand, the emphasis which the biologist lays upon the *effect* of pleasure in sustaining and heightening the flow of energy, and thus upon the value of its contribution to life in all its forms is a welcome addition to the theory as stated above. We are thus brought back through a cycle of much false theory to the truth that Aristotle perceived and expressed in his doctrine that pleasure was the sign of perfected energy, and itself contributed to that perfection.† The

* On this distinction see D. G. Ritchie's *Darwin and Hegel*, essay on "Origin and Validity."

† See *Chapters from Aristotle's Ethics*. The gain to Ethics is to be measured by the strength of the tendency which has asserted itself in all ages to regard pleasure as an illusion of sense, by its nature hostile to morality.

evolutionist makes a further advance on the old theory in insisting on the distinction between the pleasures accompanying activities which are favourable and activities which are unfavourable to the welfare of the organism as a whole. Here also we have a revival of the ancient distinction between "true" and "false" pleasures—those that indicate the well-being merely of a part, and those that report the well-being of the whole which is the essential man. The evolutionist is only wrong when he fails to see that it is the activity that gives value to the feeling, and not the feeling to the activity.

This brings us to the more questionable parts of the theory.

§ 67. Difficulties in Evolutionary Ethics.

(1) The first group of difficulties and questions which this theory raises centres round the uncritical alliance which it has formed with the pleasure theory. The hedonistic assumption is so confidently embraced by Mr. Spencer, that it might be supposed that biology had brought new facts to its support. But so far is this from being the case, that biological theory goes on all fours with the results of our previous criticism of this theory. It shows that impulse and desire precede the feeling of pleasure, and not *vice versâ*. Pleasure indeed follows upon successful effort: it is the sign of it; but the impulse to exercise the function precedes and conditions the pleasure, not the feeling the impulse. In human life the object gives us pleasure, in the first instance, because we desire it; we do not desire it because it gives us pleasure.* We may, of course, make

* For an early statement of this truth, see Butler's *Sermons*, XI.: "That all particular appetites and passions are towards *external*

the pleasure our object. We may use the organs (*e.g.*, of taste and digestion) in order to enjoy the pleasure of the exercise of their functions. And no harm will be done so long as a pernicious habit is not contracted. In the latter case Nature will on occasions revenge herself on this, which is, in the strict sense of the word, a "preposterous" use of the organ, by impairing, perhaps destroying, it altogether.

Nor can it be replied that, though desire must precede the feeling of *pleasure*, yet desire itself is the result of felt uneasiness, and is therefore, even its most primitive form, an effort to escape from pain.* For the natural instinct or longing is itself again the condition of the felt pain, not *vice versâ*. In view of the demonstrable priority of the impulse of self-preservation and self-expression it is difficult to understand the preference for the hedonistic assumption except on the ground of inveterate prejudice.

(2) There is the more reason why those who, with Herbert Spencer, believe in the value of life, and the essential sanity of the instinct to seek for its increase,

things themselves, distinct from the *pleasure arising from them*, is manifest from hence : that there could not be this pleasure were it not for that prior suitableness between the object and the passion ; there could be no enjoyment or delight from one thing more than another, from eating food more than from swallowing a stone, if there were not an affection or appetite to one thing more than another." See also Hume's *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix I. fin. This is the explanation of the so-called "paradox of Hedonism," viz. that the only way to secure pleasure is not to aim at it (see Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 142), on which see Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 foll.

* As Locke (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II., 21, § 29 foll., 2nd ed.) and the modern Pessimist contend. *Cp.* Ward, *loc. cit.*, p. 74.

should refuse to hamper themselves with this assumption, seeing that, instead of closing, it in reality opens wide the door to the pessimistic doubts as to the value of life which Spencer set himself to combat. The claim, as we have seen, is that what gives value to that "increase of life" which constitutes the end of evolution, and will mark the "completely adapted man in the completely evolved society," is the increase of pleasure which it brings with it. But is there any way of proving that this "increase of life" does actually bring increase of happiness as ordinarily understood? Are the more highly developed nations and individuals "happier" than the less developed? It might indeed be argued that the greater the variety of powers and capacities developed in mankind, the greater the capacities of enjoyment. But that is just the point that is contested; and, as is well known, an influential philosophy has been built upon the opposite theory, that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Without ourselves subscribing to Pessimism,* we may fairly doubt whether more highly developed powers of mind and conscience necessarily bring with them increase of happiness. It is quite certain that they are apt to throw the individual or the nation possessing them into situations where an uncompensated sacrifice of happiness seems to be required: so that, as Leslie Stephen admits, to exhort a man to virtue may be "to exhort him to acquire a faculty which will, in many cases, make him less fit than the less moral man for getting the greatest amount of happiness from a given combination of circumstances." If we retain Spencer's metaphor of the "dimensions" of

* Which, as has been wittily observed, "if it be true, differs from other truths by its uselessness."

life we may ask whether in addition to "length and breadth" there is not a third, viz., depth, which, whatever we are to say of the others, may very well be a *minus* quantity as regards pleasure and anything that could go by the name of happiness.* To place the argument on a solid basis, what is required of the new as of the old utilitarianism is a frank recognition of the inadequacy of any merely quantitative standard. Spencer, as we have seen, seems to advance a step in insisting on breadth as well as length of life. But this conception is ambiguous. If it means "more of the same," as is implied in the arithmetical metaphor, the argument is open to the above criticism; if it means, as it ought to mean, something qualitatively different as more distinctly human, this ought to be stated, as it is the key to the whole situation.†

(3) If to this it be replied that the pain which such highly developed types involve is the result of social maladjustment, which *ex hypothesi* is excluded in a society where a perfect equilibrium between function and environment has been established, we are brought to a further question. For, again, the hypothesis itself is open to grave doubt. Can it be shown that progress *is* towards such a state of stable equilibrium? Is such

* "Odd," says the doctor in Margaret Deland's clever novel *Sydney*, "that it is the sight of trouble which makes me want to live more earnestly; for the deeper you live, the more trouble you have. But I suppose trouble is a man's birthright, and instinct makes him seek it." *Cp.* the passage quoted from *Romola*, in Green's *Proleg. to Ethics*, p. 404 *n.*

† The student should consult Mr. Warner Fite's excellent statement, *Introduction to the Study of Ethics*, p. 67. "The term breadth," he concludes, "is a mere metaphor. Multiplying the length of a life into its breadth is like multiplying the height of a building by its architectural beauty."

a "completely adapted man" as Spencer* supposes a possible conception? That progress means the establishment of equilibrium between ever higher and more differentiated functions in society and the individual is undoubted; but it is equally undoubted that in each case the equilibrium is established only to be broken into by new forces which have again to be equilibrated, new differences that have to be reconciled. Of an absolute and final equilibrium of the kind demanded, from which pain and conflict will be excluded, evolution knows nothing. The only analogue to it in nature is death. Where there is life there is change. In death alone (individual or national) there is final equilibrium.† Here alone there is no change and development in the organism, requiring readjustment to an environment which is different because the organism is different. In regard to social progress, we have no warrant for believing that individual aspiration after a higher form of life than the environment admits of will not keep pace

* See the whole chapter on "Absolute and Relative Ethics" in *Data of Ethics*, with which may be compared the earlier and more uncompromising statement of the same doctrine, *Social Statics*, Part I., ch. i. For a criticism of it see Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 421-2; Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book I., ch. ii., § 2, and art. in *Mind*, XVIII., pp. 222-6. See also p. 160 *n.* below.

† *Cp.* Dewey and Tufts, *op. cit.*, 363. Professor A. E. Taylor's argument (*Problem of Conduct*, p. 231 foll.) to prove that "though with the advance of civilisation and the improvement of social institutions the occasions upon which they are demanded may become rarer, the sacrifices become at the same time more imperative and harder to make," seems to me true as a criticism of Spencer's conception of an ultimate harmony of duty and pleasure, but fallacious for the purpose for which it is intended, viz., as a proof of an ultimate discord between the ideals of self-development and social service. See below pp. 195 foll.

with the progress already attained, and that struggle and sacrifice, with the pain that they involve, will not be the permanent portion of the more highly developed, *i.e.* the more moral, individuals and societies.*

But even though we admit the possibility of a society so completely adapted to its environment, and consisting of wills so completely harmonised with one another, that every element of pain, even that expressed by the word obligation,† will disappear, it might still be questioned whether such a society is one which we could take as our ideal. If it be true that man by his nature is progressive, that the strain and accompanying unpleasantness of the endeavour to realise himself in ever higher forms is a necessary element in his life and not merely a transitory accident; if it be true that it is of the essence of man to be

> "hurled
> From change to change unceasingly,
> His soul's wings never furled,"—

then the biological Utopia of Spencer must prove, as a moral idea, to be as uninviting and inoperative as the economic paradise of M. Godin ‡ or Mr. Bellamy, or the "Nowhere" from which Mr. Morris brings us news.§

* Recent events in the "changeless East" are an instance in point. Changes in the environment have found a responsive chord within, and the dead awake. The above argument is not of course intended to suggest that development is not desirable, but merely that *on the hedonistic hypothesis* it is not possible to *prove* its desirableness.

† See *Data of Ethics*, § 46 fin.

‡ See Gronlund's criticism, *Our Destiny*, ch. i., § 8.

§ Besides the other advance (mentioned p. 147 *n.*) which marks Stephen's presentation of evolutionary ethics, it has the further merit of relegating the conception of absolute ethics to the lumber-room of ethical speculation. "The attempt to

(4) If we look for the root of these misconceptions we are led finally to ask whether they do not come from the preoccupation of the mind of the school with biological ideas that are only applicable with large reservations to the field of ethics. It is under this influence that the "environment" is conceived of as a system of fixed conditions to which the organism is bound to conform on pain of extinction—a species of mould, as it has been expressed, into which it has to be run. I believe it can be shown that such a conception is wholly inadequate even in the case of the lower animals. Adaptation of the environment to organism is as necessary as adaptation of organism to environment. With the dawn of purposive intelligence and mutual recognition the whole horizon is altered, and that in two directions. (1) Thenceforth the main problem is not to adapt the inward to the outward, but the outward to the inward, not to mould the self to conformity with nature, but to mould nature to increasing conformity with moral and æsthetic ideals. "Purposive intelligence once called into existence promptly becomes the master of the forces to which it owes its own creation."* (2) With the birth of society physical nature ceases for the individual to be the sole or indeed the main factor in the environment. Adaptation to his physical surroundings may be said to be secured for him by the society

establish an absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness is in ethics what the attempting to square the circle or to discover perpetual motion is in geometry or mechanics" (*Science of Ethics*, p. 430). Alexander (*Moral Order and Progress*, pp. 266 foll.) criticises it even more severely, as founded on a misconception of the meaning of "adaptation to environment." Cp. *Ethical Studies*, p. 84 *n.*

* A. E. Taylor, *op. cit.*

of which he is a part leaving him free for the now pressing requirement of the acquisition of the moral qualities that will fit him for his place in the social whole. To realise these changes is to have passed beyond the idea of environment as a fixed limit to which human nature may be regarded as asymptotically approximating, and for the same reason beyond the whole idea of adaptation to environment in any merely biological sense as an adequate account of the standard of moral judgment.

§ 68. Summary of Criticism.

Summarising these criticisms, we may say that evolutionary ethics as expounded by its leading representatives has entangled itself in hedonistic presuppositions with the result of obscuring the qualitative element in different ideals of conduct; so far as it escapes from these it is only to become involved in biological ideas which are equally fatal in obscuring the place of conscious purpose in human life.

We have already seen how the moral laws which are the "data of ethics" can only spring from the conception of conscious purpose. We have further seen how such a purpose must be a personal good, *i.e.*, the realisation or fulfilment of the self. Lastly, we have seen how this can only be sought in concrete objects, not in any mere state of feeling. The last result is practically accepted by the evolutionist, when he proposes to substitute for greatest pleasure the end of "social health" or "increase of life." But in rejecting this element of error in the older utilitarianism, he has also dropped the element of truth which it represented, viz., that the end must be a form of *personal*

good.* It is open to him to point out that the "person" cannot be conceived of as an isolated atom, and that the end cannot be the isolated gratification of any one or of any number of such atoms; but this only means that the "good" of the individual must be also a common good. It cannot mean that the good is not a personal one. If it did, the theory itself could only mean that it is impossible to deduce any moral law from the conception of end, *i.e.*, to have any science of ethics in the proper sense. Yet this is precisely the difficulty to which evolutionary ethics, in the writings of its leading exponents, has brought us. Our objection to their conclusions is not that they apply evolution to conscience and morality, or avail themselves of biological conceptions in interpreting the phenomena of human life in general, but that they cling to the empirical in the sense of the naturalistic or exclusively biological point of view, and so fail to get the full meaning out of their own results. "The doctrine of evolution itself," it has been well said, "when added to empirical morality, only widens our view of the old landscape—does not enable us to pass from 'is' to 'ought,' or from efficient to final cause, any more than the telescope can point beyond the sphere of spatial quantity."† The "health," "vitality," "adaptation," or what not, "of the social organism," are valuable *formulæ* in helping us to define the contents of "the good." As anything more, they are abstractions without relation to the moral end.

* For criticisms founded on this defect see Royce, *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 74-85; Dewey, *Outlines*, pp. 71-8.

† Sorley, *op. cit.*, p. 273. *Cp.* Sidgwick's art. on "Mr. Spencer's Ethical System," *Mind*, XVIII., and in further illustration of the criticism in this chapter, Appendix C at end.

What is required to complete the evolutionist theory is (1) to recognise that Hedonism has become an anachronism; (2) to add to its empirical demonstration that the individual is essentially social a teleological demonstration that his good is essentially a common good.

NOTE.

The form into which W. K. Clifford threw the evolutionist doctrine marks a still further stage of advance both upon Leslie Stephen's and upon Herbert Spencer's statement of it, in that he comes nearer than either to the view that right is founded upon the contrast between a true or extended, and a false or restricted self. In the following passage he applies his doctrine of "the tribal self" to the practical question of motive. See Appendix C below. "'If you want to live together in this complicated way' (called society), 'your ways must be straight, and not crooked; you must seek the truth, and love no lie.' Suppose we answer, 'I don't want to live together with other men in this complicated way; and so I shall not do as you tell me,'—that is not the end of the matter, as it might be with other scientific precepts. For obvious reasons, it is *right* in this case to reply, 'Then, in the name of my people, I do not like you,' and to express this dislike by appropriate methods. And the offender, being descended from a social race, is unable to escape his conscience, the voice of his tribal self, which says, 'In the name of the tribe, I hate myself for this treason which I have done'" (*Essays and Lectures*, "On the Scientific Basis of Morals"). We have here got beyond the pleasure theory; we have further exchanged the empirical for the teleological point of view, in so far as the "self" is made the centre of interest. All that is wanted is to realise what is implied in the idea of such a self. This, to a certain extent, Clifford shows that he does in his Essay on "Cosmic Emotion," where he proves it to imply a consciousness of a universal moral order. His early death probably lost us the opportunity of seeing evolutionary ethics openly discarding the worn-out raiment of the hedonistic philosophy.

BOOK IV

THE END AS GOOD

CHAPTER I.

THE END AS COMMON GOOD.

§ 69. Summary of Results

We may now sum up the results which our analysis and criticism have hitherto enabled us to reach :—(1) The standard of morality is to be found in the conception of end, not of law. Moral law is valid as flowing from the conception of a moral end, which cannot be mere obedience to law, whether supposed to be given by another or by the self in the form of conscience. (2) The end is an ideal form of life. As all voluntary action has some form of good for its aim, and all consciously conceived good may be described as realisation of self in one form or another, the highest good is that of the self conceived of as a whole, however that in turn may have to be defined. (3) The ideal cannot consist in a mere state of feeling resulting from the satisfaction of qualitatively identical desires ; nor yet in complete determination by reason apart from all desire ; but in the subordination of the parts of our nature and the activities to which they prompt to the law of the self as a whole which includes both reason and desire. (4) Finally, we have already made some headway towards

proving that the self as thus defined is not an isolated atom, but is only comprehensible as a member of a society, whose moral judgments reflect a moral order already established in its environment. I may perhaps assume that sufficient has been said on the former of the last two more positive results: the ideal which is also the real self consists in the harmonious, *i.e.*, the proportionate or "reasonable" fulfilment of its needs physical, mental, emotional. But as the prejudice against the conception of the self as essentially social, and of moral judgments as only intelligible in relation to an organised society, has proved so inveterate, I may be excused for devoting the first part of this chapter to the further elucidation of a point of view which, whether a final resting-point in our argument or not, is fundamental to it.

§ 70. Current Distinctions in Social Theory.

Until quite lately it was a current opinion * that, while it requires a metaphysician like Hobbes to trace back all the elements and instincts of human nature to the egoistic desire for "gain and glory," it is yet possible to divide them psychologically into two distinct classes—the egoistic, or self-regarding, and the altruistic, or other-regarding. Of the former type we have the instinct of self-preservation and of the acquisition of property. Of the latter we have types in benevolence and sympathy. Similarly, there is the obvious social distinction between the individual and society, man and the state. On the one hand, we have the "rights of man." The individual

* Not unsupported by the highest scientific authorities, as when Spencer represented human nature as the battle-ground of two permanently antithetical forces of egoism and altruism.

is supposed to be born into the world with certain natural rights belonging to him as an individual. These are the germ of that system of conventional or artificial rights with which in any civilised country the law courts invest him.* On the other hand, as securing to him the enjoyment of his natural rights by means of the police and the law courts, the state has a certain limited right of taxation and control over individuals. One of the chief questions for the political philosopher, it was supposed, is to define the limits which the state must observe in thus "interfering" with the natural rights of individuals. The quintessence of wisdom in this field was to recognise that, inasmuch as rights belong to man naturally and not in virtue of any connection with the artificial organisation of society and state, the state has really no business to interfere at all.

It is not difficult to show that these distinctions, though relatively valid, as giving us different points of view from which it may be useful to look at psychological and social facts, are misleading when taken as absolute and final.

* The natural rights of man apparently are liberty, property, security, and "Resistance of Oppression." See Declaration of the Rights of Man, quoted in Paine's treatise on the same. The Declaration of Rights in the Constitution of the State of California further adds the right of "pursuing and *obtaining* happiness." See Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, Vol. II., p. 643. As necessary corollaries of these some add "access to the soil"; others, more generally, "access to the means of production." Professed Socialists might be expected to be free of this individualistic leaven; but it appears like a recrudescence of it when a Socialist congress (Zurich, 1893) declares against all special legislation for women "as an attack upon their freedom and equal rights, as opposed to men." On individualistic survivals in current Socialism see Bosanquet's *Civilisation of Christendom*, Lecture on "Socialism and Individualism Philosophically Considered."

§ 71. Relativity of these Distinctions.

(1) In regard to the psychological distinctions referred to above between egoistic and altruistic desires, it is easy to show how the thought of self and the thought of others cross and interlace with one another, in such a manner as to leave us with only a vanishing distinction between them. Thus, nothing seems more individualistic than the desire for *life*. But the moment we think of it, we see how in a rational being it is its social significance that makes life valuable to him. It is doubtful whether in a moment of peril a normally constituted individual thinks first, or even at all, of himself, except so far as he is related to others. His thoughts fly, *e.g.*, to his wife and family. When life is emptied of these relations, *i.e.*, when it appears only as an egoistic good, it is apt to appear no good at all. It is just its emptiness of social content that makes life appear so worthless to the suicide.

On the other hand, the benevolent desire for the good of others involves a reference to self. By this it is not merely meant, as Professor Bain puts it, that "sympathy cannot exist upon the extreme of self-abnegation. We must retain a sufficient amount of the self-regarding element to consider happiness an object worth striving for,"* but that, as has been already frequently pointed out, there is a sense in which the object of all desire is personal good. It is only as part of my own, as in some way included in the fulfilment of my ideal of what life should be, that I can desire my neighbour's good.

* *Mental and Moral Science*, p. 282.

The inadequacy of such a classification of the elements of human nature into egoistic and altruistic is further seen in the difficulty which we should have in classifying the more violent forms of passion under either head. Thus love in its purer forms is commonly thought to be an altruistic emotion, having for its object the good of the loved object. Yet it may on occasions take forms into which the good of the loved object does not enter at all, or only as a subordinate element.* Similarly revenge, which is presumably upon this classification to be set down as an egoistic passion, nevertheless takes forms which involve the most complete self-abnegation.†

(2) Of the relations of individual to society it may likewise be shown that the personal rights put forward by individualistic philosophers are, if taken literally, an arbitrary assumption. Whence, it may be asked, does the individual derive these rights? He has them, it may be said, by *nature* (the theory of "natural rights" seems to imply this). "Man," said Rousseau, "is born free," *i.e.*, independent of the laws,

* In describing Romola's love for her dead father, George Eliot says: "Love does not aim simply at the conscious good of the beloved object: it is not satisfied without perfect loyalty of heart; it aims at its own completeness."

† Speaking of the passion that consumes Baldassare in the same novel, George Eliot says: "It is the nature of all human passion, the lowest as well as the highest, that there is a point where it ceases to be properly egoistic, and is like a fire kindled within our being, to which everything else in us is mere fuel." Similarly hatred has been defined as "inverted love"; it is often like love in this, that "it seeketh not its own," *dum alteri noceat sui negligens* (quoted in a similar connection by Hume, *Principles of Morals*, App. II.). *Cp.* Butler's Sermons, XI., Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II., p. 499.

habits, and conventions of society. But this is certainly not the case. The child who comes into the world inherits everything he has from a previous state of society. He owes everything he possesses to a combination of forces and circumstances (national, local, and family influences) in their nature social. It was a favourite metaphor with the older individualistic writers to liken the soul of the newly born child to a piece of blank paper, on which it has the right to be allowed to print its own record of freshly cast experience. It would be a more apt illustration of its true nature to compare it to a palimpsest of many layers, or better still to no isolated thing at all, but to a word or sentence in a continuous narrative. The soul comes into the world already stamped with a meaning determined by its relation to all that went before,—having, in other words, a context in relation to which alone its character can be understood. It sums up the tendencies and traditions of the past out of which it has sprung,—giving them, indeed, a new form or expression, inasmuch as it is an individual, but only carrying on and developing their meaning, and not to be understood except in relation to them.

Or it may be said that man acquires these rights by *education*. Knowledge, trained strength of will, gives him power, individuality, freedom. This, of course, is true, but not in the sense that with these advantages he acquires any rights as against society. On the contrary, the dependence of the individual upon society in the sense claimed is still more obvious when we consider what is implied in education. Intellectually it consists from first to last in the appropriation of a body of knowledge, not contained in the mind of

any individual parent or teacher, but diffused through the language and literature of the society into which the child is born. The child has not to make its own ideas about the world, nor has the parent or teacher to make them for it. In spoken language, which is essentially a social institution,* there is already a storehouse of distinctions and generalisations which the child begins by appropriating. Its thoughts adapt themselves to the mould which is here prepared for them. They will be accurate and adequate in proportion (*a*) to the stage of accuracy which the language has reached (*i.e.*, the stage of intellectual advance which the society whose language it is represents); (*b*) to the degree of culture which the group of persons who form the child's immediate circle have attained; (*c*) to the cerebral organisation it has inherited from its parents and remoter ancestors. Not less representative of social acquisitions is the written language of books. This or that man indeed is said to write a book: he puts his name at the beginning of it, and his list of authorities at the end. But in most cases it would represent the respective contributions more accurately if he reversed the order. All that he has done, all that he can do, is to recast the material supplied him by the labour of countless generations. In this sense every one, as Emerson maintains, is a plagiarist; everything, "even a house, is a plagiarism."

The same remarks apply to the child's moral education. Here, again, it is social custom that is the main factor,

* "The man who dares to think himself independent of others cannot even put the blasphemous conception into words without immediate self-contradiction, since the language he uses is not his own."—Comte, *Pos. Pol.* (Eng. Tr.), Book I., p. 177.

whether it acts directly or through a teacher—language with its store of ready-made moral distinctions, the nursery with its "spirit," its laws, and, as Plato would add, its pictures and songs, the family, the playground, the business world, society, the church. These begin to act upon the child's will, forming or deforming it, at a time when conscious choice is impossible. From its earliest infancy, to use a philosopher's somewhat grandiloquent expression, the child "has been suckled at the breast of the Universal Ethos." *

§ 72. Further Illustrations of Dependence of Individual on Society.

Plato sought at the beginning of moral philosophy to bring home this truth from the side of the economic structure of society, and the illustration, though obscured by modern individualistic conceptions, has not lost its suggestiveness. Thus we sometimes hear of a "self-made man." But a moment's consideration makes it obvious that it is as impossible for a man to "make" as we saw it to be for him to educate himself. All he does is to use the opportunities that society offers to him. Where, to look no further, would his factory or business, his trade or his profession be, but for the police who protect it, the laws that secure him the title-deeds, the markets that supply the raw material, the community that supplies the labour to work it, the system of railways, harbours, etc., that are the means of disposing of the product? What is the share that all these things, each in its turn depending for its existence and efficiency upon a community of organised wills, as well as on the social labour of many generations,

* On the subject of this section, see Bradley, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–58.

have in the wealth that is produced, and what is the share of the energetic individual who uses them? where in all this are we to draw the line between the respective rights of the man and of the state?*

As a final illustration, we might take the case of great men. These, at any rate, it might be thought, are an exception to this dependence of the individual upon his society and his time. They stand out in solitary independence of the society in the midst of which they live. If they have not made themselves, they seem to have been made by God, and to owe little or nothing to their environment. Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, would thus appear to have been makers of their social environment, instead of having been made by it. And indeed there is a sense in which this is true. Such men seem to contribute a new element to social progress, and to leave the world different from what they found it, or from what it would have been without them. This element of individuality must always be a fatal objection to any attempt to reduce history to a department of sociology. "The heel of Achilles in all historical speculations of this class has been the rôle of the individual."† But this ought not to blind us to his essential dependence, both for what he is and for what he accomplishes, on the spirit of his time. He is great not in virtue of that which separates him from his time, but of that

* *Cp.* Mackenzie's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, ch. iii., pp. 150–54, where it is pointed out, among many excellent illustrations of the general contention in the text, that the self-made man who is of no sect or school and calls no man master only succeeds in being what Goethe calls "a fool in his own right." In this connection the history of the Greek word *ἰδιώτης* is suggestive.

† Professor Bury, "Darwinism and History," in *Darwin and Modern Science*, p. 541.

which unites him to it. It is his insight into the wants of the time, his sympathy with its blind longings and aspirations, that gives him his power over it. It is on this account that great men "represent" their time.* They sum up and give expression to its tendencies. In this sense it is not so much they who act, as the spirit of the time that acts in them. The permanent part of their work (the establishment of an empire, of a system of law or of education, a new impulse in art, or a new social organisation) was "in the air" when the man arrived. He was only an instrument in giving effect to it.

§ 73. The Social Organism.

This view of the dependence of the individual upon the larger life that surrounds him, writers imbued with biological ideas have sought, as we saw, to express in the formula that society is an organism. But the phrase is of doubtful interpretation, and, as we have also seen, the ethical student has his reasons to fear the biologist's gifts. For the disconcerting discovery is apt to follow that there are points of difference as essential as the points of resemblance. Thus, Herbert Spencer,† after developing the analogy with meticulous detail, realises that there is a rift in the lute. While the biological organism has one common centre of feeling, society feels and thinks in its individual members; from which he draws the conclusion that it represents an organism of a lowly type like a sponge or a jelly fish—in other words, that is not

* *Cp.* Ben Jonson's apostrophe to Shakespeare as "Soul of the Age."

† See *Essays*. Cp. *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* (Seth and Haldane): "The Social Organism," by Professor Henry Jones, esp. pp. 193, 209 foll.

an organism at all. Others again have pointed out that "a vital organism and a society are radically distinguished by the fact that the individual components of the former, namely, the cells, are morphologically as well as functionally differentiated, whereas the individuals which compose a society are morphologically homogeneous and only functionally differentiated," and proceed to warn us that "sociologists who draw inferences from the assumption of the organic nature of society must fall into error." * All this of course has to be admitted. Any comparison between the physical organism and a society of human beings must be more of the nature of a suggestive metaphor than a valid analogy. But the point that sociologists have sought to bring out by means of it is the real interdependence of the parts of society upon one another—the reality of their membership in a living whole and the fallaciousness of all attempts to represent their relation to one another as merely mechanical. The question before us is how far the above differences invalidate such a conclusion.

With reference to the first, it is quite true that there is no corporate mind and will *independent* of the individual minds and wills that compose it. But it is equally true that we know of no individual minds which do not draw their breath and substance from the common mind as represented by the habits and results of corporate thinking; of no individual wills which go their way independently of the objects which the community has set before itself. Doubtless the possession of mind and will makes it possible for an individual to set himself in opposition to the life of the whole: to say to the body "I have no

* Professor Bury, *ibid.*, *Darwin and Modern Science.*

need of thee," in a way in which it is impossible for the member of an animal organism. But with the possibility of secession goes also the possibility of the deeper form of union that comes from the conscious devotion to the ends of the whole.* Still more obviously fallacious must any argument against the organic unity of society be that is founded on the morphological homogeneity of the parts. It is quite true that you can't always tell a tailor from a carpenter or know a gentleman when you see him. But this is because in society we are dealing with spiritual entities, and not with physical. To one who could see mental structures as we see physical, I take it that the morphological heterogeneity of the members of an organised society would be as great as that of the members of any material organism.

The conclusion to which these considerations point seems to be that it would be a mistake on the ground of the failure of the analogy in arbitrarily selected details to reject the vital truth that it contains. If we try to express this truth in a word, it would be that individuality must be sought for not in separation from the whole, but in the whole-hearted acceptance of a definite station within it. It is from his unity with the whole that the individual draws his substance. By the same purposeful act he becomes indivisible from the whole of an indivisible unity in himself.

What we must now ask is the ethical import of these facts.

§ 74. Ethical Import of these Facts.

1. The first consequence which it is of importance

* Those who recognise this will be inclined, with Herbert Spencer himself in another passage, to describe society as "supra-organic" rather than infra-organic.

to note is how impossible it is to will a merely individual good. For a being who like man is a little higher than the animals, a little lower than the angels, it is only possible to realise his own life in so far as he realises that of at least a part of the society of which he is a member. There probably never has been such a thing as "selfishness for one." The most selfish of men desires the welfare of those with whose interests his own are bound up. Even the criminal who sets his will against some vital interest of society by the same act identifies himself with it. The burglar in seeking to elude the police system desires its continuance to protect himself in the gains of his act. Here we are dealing with mere matter of fact, obvious enough to have forced itself on the notice of individualism itself. "Any condition," says Mill,* "which is essential to a state of society becomes more and more an inseparable part of every person's conception of the state of things which he is born into, and which is the destiny of a human being"; and Spencer† writes a long chapter to show that "altruism" is a necessary part of "egoism." If the fact is to have significance for ethics we must be able to show that the well-being of society has *rights* against the individual.

2. This is precisely what I believe the foregoing analysis enables us to do. What it has really effected is to have broken into and shattered the conception of an individuality through the nature of its contents exclusive of other individualities. It enables us to see not only that the life and activities of others are a means to those of the individual, but are its very

* *Utilitarianism*, ch. iii. † *Data of Ethics.*

substance. As Höffding puts it, "Not only must the individual always stand in reciprocal relations with other personalities in order to have means for his own development, but there is also a need of devoting oneself that may appear under various forms, and that may lead one to attribute immediate worth to other personalities." * In the fulfilment, therefore, of their ends there is a true sense in which he is fulfilling his own. To seek to maintain himself in isolated independence, to refuse to be compromised by social relations, is the surest way to fail. To save his life in this sense is to lose it. On the other hand, in sinking himself in the life of the community, in identifying himself with the interests of his family, church, town, or country, he is only finding his own. To lose his life is to save it. There is no other mystery about the law of duty and of right than this. The common good has a claim upon the individual because it corresponds to his own deepest need *to be an individual.* Whatever be the psychological origin of the sense of duty in him, whatever be the sanctions through which it has taken hold of him, whatever be the historical origin of the social bond, whether in voluntary or involuntary agreement, whether in contract or status, the ultimate authority of the one and the validity of the other rest upon nothing more recondite than the relation of a real organic or supra-organic whole to its part. The sense of "duty" is the pressure which under the circumstances previously indicated the idea of the whole exercises on the part; inversely the sense of "right" is the sense of freedom which the whole experiences in its dealings with what it recognises as its vital parts.

* *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 162.

3. It sets the popular antithesis between selfishness and unselfishness in its proper light. We have already seen that selfishness in the strict sense is a psychological impossibility. Yet it is undoubtedly possible to take up an exclusive attitude towards the lives and interests of others, or to permit them to have a place only in so far as they minister as a means to a narrowly conceived ideal. The moral wrong in this is not that such a life is self-centred, or that it seeks self-fulfilment and is self-assertive. We shall have to consider the ideal of self-assertion hereafter. The wrong consists in the restrictedness of the idea of the self, which belies at once its own capacities of reaction and the claim which society has upon them. In criticising the older rationalist theory which made vice and crime to consist in a species of self-contradiction, Leslie Stephen has wittily ridiculed the idea that to murder your father is only a roundabout way of denying that he is your father. But there is a true sense in which selfishness at least is only a particularly effective mode of belying the fundamental nature of the self.

4. Are we prepared, on the ground of what we have thus discovered as the ethical import of the recognition of man's nature as social, to assert that all morality is social? We may indeed claim to have proved that the existence and well-being of society are a fundamental need of the self, and that therefore nothing that inflicts an injury upon society or that treats others merely as means to our ends can be moral. But can we go on from that to maintain that all moral judgments have reference to the health of the social organism, and that no other ends are of comparable value to it? Would not this be like saying that because the atmosphere is a fundamental

necessity of life, the one supreme object of existence is to keep it pure?

We have ourselves at the beginning of this chapter admitted the existence of a moral ideal of self-development, and in the last section we have refused to identify self-assertion with selfishness. Before we can commit ourselves, therefore, to the view that all good is social, we shall have to come to terms with such an apparent diversity of moral ideals. This is clearly a difficult question, and must be reserved for another chapter. Meantime we may try to make still surer of the ground we have won by pausing to note some of the more important consequences of the conclusions here established with regard to the general nature of society and social institutions.

§ 75. Sociological Import.

The origin and nature of organised society questions are rather for politics than ethics, but it is the point here reached that gives the clue for the larger study.

1. Older theories consistently with some of the ethical doctrines we have reviewed tended to regard the State either in whole or in part as the artificial product of a formal contract. Thus to Hobbes it was a consciously imposed limit on the natural rights of individuals, originating indeed in the will of the subjects, but maintained and administered at his own discretion by the will of the sovereign. To Locke society in its unorganised form was a natural institution, but law and government were the result of a contract between subject and sovereign for certain limited purposes.

Convenient as these theories were as an expression of the dominant political tendencies of the time, and

suggestive as the elements of truth * which each contained must remain, they clearly fail to bring out the fundamental and essential unity between individual and society. Civil society is not anything external and artificial, either in whole or in part, but the organised expression in the external world of the leading features of human life. As Plato said, it is the individual writ large. It may be said to represent a will, but it is not the will of any arbitrary power. It represents general agreement, but it is not a mere business contract. It is necessary, as Hobbes saw, for the sustenance and embellishment of individual life, which apart from it is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish short"; in particular it lays down the conditions of the secure enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, as Locke perceived, but it has a far more intimate relation with human needs than either theory grasped.

"Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure; but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico, or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the

* Hobbes seized upon the truth that law and government must have the unity of a single will, Locke that they must represent the will of the whole community. See Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 104.

ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born." So wrote Burke,* anticipating the modern conception of the function of organised society in relation to the individual, which is the converse of the ethical relation of the individual to society.

Obvious though it now may seem to be, it has taken politicians over a century to realise it. In Burke's own time the prevalent idea of the conscious action of society through law and government was that it ought to be limited to the protection of citizens from public or private attack. In the course of the nineteenth century an extended idea of collective responsibility gained ground in view of subtler forms of aggression. But liberty was still conceived of as the absence of restraint rather than the presence of opportunity, and State action was defended as a mode of protecting the individual and promoting freedom of contract. It is only quite lately, in our own time, that the responsibility of the community as an organised whole for the development of industrial, intellectual, artistic opportunity in the spirit of Burke's prophecy has been realised.

2. What is true of society in general is true of the special organs of society we call institutions, whether the more involuntary, such as the family and the city, or the more voluntary, such as a church or a professional or industrial organisation. Here also the view to which our analysis points stands in marked contrast to older theories. To the supporters of natural rights these forms were apt to appear in the light of limitations and

* *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

obstructions to man's natural liberty. Man was born free, yet everywhere he is in chains to the dead hand of forms and institutions which he did not make. To the utilitarian they were apt to appear as mere means for the increase of material well-being. From the point of view here reached the former view can only hold of those institutions which are outgrown and continue to exist by the mere inertia of custom, while the latter doctrine contains at best but a slender portion of the truth. It is true that institutions represent custom, and are to society in general what habits are to the individual. But just as habits are not the obstruction to free development which some writers have supposed them to be, but the embodiments of more permanent purposes and a protection against momentary impulses and caprices, so social institutions must be conceived of as standing for the more permanent ends of corporate life—ways in which the general will has "set," and which have stood the test of experience. As contrasted with combinations for more temporary purposes, they have been happily compared to the concepts of logical thought, which differ from mere chance "associations of ideas" in that they represent organising principles among our ideas. Just as abstract conceptions like mechanical interaction or evolution, or again the concepts of concrete individuals like the earth or the age of Pericles, are centres or meeting-points at once of the ideas of the individual himself and of the ideas of different individuals, so the institutions of society serve the twofold object of concentrating the individual will and uniting separate individual wills in a common humanly significant purpose. If this is so, it is clear that they enter into the life of the individual in far other

fashion than as a mere means to a predetermined idea of happiness. Let the reader consider what he owes to home or business, to the part he has taken in civic life, his political organisation, or his church, in the way of the development and recognition of his own powers, the extension of his moral horizon, or the concentration of his will, the formation of his standards, and the disciplining of his temper, and he will understand the deepening and expansion which such institutions bring. It is not merely that they *contribute to our happiness*; they *change our idea of happiness*. It is this that constitutes their educational value. Individually they represent, as we have seen, some essential function of the common will: they are highly charged centres of common purpose; collectively they open out into the wide world of human life as it ought to be conceived. Just as contact with various concepts and ways of thinking expands the mind and makes it at home in the world of ideas which we call culture, so a rich environment of institutional forms opens up the spiritual horizon and makes a man a citizen of the moral universe. To the parent who asked where he should send his son for the best education the Pythagorean philosopher replied, to the city with the best ordered system of institutions.

Note.

The historical genesis of the view presented in the text forms an interesting chapter in the history of ethics. It may be said to be the view from which the great thinkers set out in the beginning of philosophy. It is firmly grasped by Plato, who at the end of the first book of the *Republic* suggests the true definition of virtue as a social function, and in the later books treats society, though with certain limitations, as a spiritual organism. Aristotle, who is sometimes erroneously represented as an individualist, develops these ideas in the *Ethics* and *Politics* with still greater insight into their

significance (see especially his remarkable criticism of Plato, *Politics*, Book II). The history of modern ethics may be said to be the rediscovery of this fundamental truth, and the presentation of it in a form enriched by the experience and purified by the discussions of the intervening centuries. We have already noted the part played in this process of rediscovery by the scientific writers of our own time ; but they were anticipated by the philosophers of the early part of the present century. Among these, Hegel and Comte, working independently in Germany and France, will always be acknowledged as master builders. Comte's presentation of the "organic" doctrine, otherwise full and striking, suffers unfortunately from the want of a sound basis in psychology and metaphysics, and from the fantastic embellishments of Positivist ceremonial. Fortunately, the English student is no longer debarred by the uncouthness of Hegel's own writings from the study of his sounder ideas. His nuggets of truth have been broken down by the enthusiastic labours of younger thinkers in our own country, and have now become current coin in this as in other fields of speculation. Besides the books referred to in the notes see B. Bosanquet's *Psychology of the Moral Self*; W. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics* ; Wundt's *Ethics* (Eng. Tr.), vol. iii.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNITY OF GOOD.

§ 76. Apparent Conflict of Standards.

We were engaged in the last chapter in showing that the good is something that carries us beyond the life that is merely individual. Yet we started from the assumption which our ordinary moral judgments seem to support, namely that individuality is itself a good; and these two are not *primâ facie* consistent with each other. On the one hand we have the ideal of individual *personality* as a unified, self-contained whole, on the other hand that of the distracted and dispersed *impersonality* which is represented by devotion to social ends. Moreover, in developing the idea of a social self we had the fact forced upon us that this is itself a whole of parts—family, civic community, church, humanity—each of which claims a separate allegiance which may conflict with the others, while beyond all of them, over and above both personal and social welfare, we have to acknowledge certain impersonal or super-personal objects, such as beauty, truth, God, suggesting new possibilities of conflict. Finally, besides all these differences which we might call material, as dependent on differences in the content

of life, we have found hints of a difference of form, according as the ideal life is conceived of as many-sided and harmonious, or as cramped and mutilated, with much imperfectly developed and therefore imperfectly concordant.

To these conflicts recent ethical discussion has called attention, and the question has been raised whether they are not fatal to all attempts to establish any single ethical standard. In view of this critical question the main problem of ethics in the immediate future is likely to centre round the possibility of bringing these conflicting ideas into harmony with one another. "Every ethical reasoning," writes Professor Höffding,* "has validity only so far as the disputants recognise a definite primordial value which determines all more special goods. One may take the standpoint of the single instant, or of the single impulse, or the standpoint of the isolated personality, or that of the family, the class, the state, or of mankind. The question is whether all such standards can be brought into real harmony with one another."

While it would be idle to expect that a problem that goes so deep into the nature of human life can be fully solved in the few paragraphs it is here possible to devote to it, it is too fundamental to be wholly ignored. What I shall attempt in this chapter is the removal of some preliminary difficulties and the indication of a line of thought which, if systematically followed out, seems to me to make it not only possible, but necessary, to adhere to the initial assumption of the unity of the moral world.

* *Problems of Philosophy*, "The Problem of Virtue," p. 165.

§ 77. **Antitheses founded on False Abstraction.**

Among the antitheses above mentioned there are some which seem to be the result rather of a false abstraction than of any real contradiction in the content of the terms opposed. Such an abstraction seems to underlie the term humanity when used to indicate an object of separate allegiance. Thus when Professor Dewey* writes, "The world of action is a world of which the individual is one limit and humanity another"; or Professor Höffding in the above passage conceives of the obligation to humanity as a possible rival to other social duties, we seem justified in asking whether the terms or "limits" are *pari materia*. It is undoubtedly true that we must conceive of the moral order as extending beyond the limits of any particular time and country, and as progressively realising itself over the whole world and through the ages. History in the ordinary sense is rightly regarded as the record of the form it takes and the changes it undergoes in particular countries. Universal history is the record of these forms and changes as organically related to one another, and to the whole which we call the growth or evolution of civilisation. It is further true that our own time has seen the more or less successful attempt to regulate international intercourse in the common interest. But we must refuse to recognise any duties to humanity as a separate organism which are not duties from the point of view of one or other of the intermediate organic centres. A parent's duty to educate his children, or an employer's to pay a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, is equally a

* *Ethics*, p. 430.

duty to humanity, to the family, and to the state. Loyalty to the narrower circle of duties necessarily involves loyalty to the wider, and *vice versâ*. In his description of Mrs. Jellyby's "elescopic philanthropy" Dickens is only emphasizing the truth which the philosopher expresses in different language when he reminds us that "there is no other genuine enthusiasm for humanity than one that has travelled the common highway of reason—the life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen—and can never forget that it is still only a further stage in the same journey."* The reason is that humanity is not the name of any entity different from the ordinary traits of human nature or the ordinary organs of human society, but the name of what is of universal value in all of them.

A similar correction, *mutatis mutandis*, seems to be required in the conception of duties to God which may enter into conflict with duties to humanity. Here, too, it is legitimate, and it may be ultimately necessary to recognise a wider point of view than that of mankind. We may conceive of the establishment of moral relations and the sovereignty of conscience, as Kant and Fichte did, as the end or final cause of a cosmic process. Moreover, it may be insisted that so to conceive of the moral life endows it with a particular dignity, and, if not with a new sanction in the sense already discussed, at least with a new sanctity. But again we have to beware of setting up a circle of "religious duties," directed to objects out of relation to those which claim our moral allegiance. It is indeed true that the religious man may recognise duties which others deny or neglect,

* T. H. Green, "Introduction to the Moral Part of Hume's Treatise," *Works*, Vol. I., p. 871.

such as meditation, prayer, attendance at public worship. But it ought to be observed that it is the import of these observances for the service of life which gives them their importance for religion. If this import be recognised by the individual; if it be acknowledged, for instance, that they serve an important end in purifying the affections or creating an attitude of will,* they are not only religiously but morally obligatory. Apart from such recognition, not only are they irrelevant to the moral, and therefore to the religious life—they may be an actual hindrance to both.

§ 78. Conflicts which depend on Social Maladjustment.

Nor is there any real difficulty in conflicts that depend on imperfect social adaptation. With the rise of new ideals of individual or corporate life, the inertia of old forms of thought or organisation may bring not only the interests of different groups and persons, but different interests in the same individual into collision. New industrial ideals may not only set class against class, but may set a man against his own household in the sacrifice of the comfort of his home or of his friendly relations with a benevolent employer which they require of him. Under this head also would come many instances of the conflict which we described above as that between self-development and self-denial. What makes self-denial an ideal to one may be the absence of a true ideal of self-development in another. A temperance reformer forswears strong drink, or a socialist forswears the ordinary luxuries of life, as a protest against current forms of self-indulgence.

* *Cf.* Pascal's exhortation "to begin by sprinkling holy water and observing ceremonies," for "*the rest would follow.*"

In all those cases it may be held that the conflict is only temporary. In a better condition of industrial relations the interests of a man's trade will be the interests of his family. Even now the strike itself is in the interest of a better general family life. In the same way there ought to be no antagonism between the satisfaction of the reasonable needs of the body or of the higher tastes and the moral well-being of one's neighbour. As William Morris, who cared as few men for both, said: "If most men lived reasonably, and with justice to their fellows, no men would be drawn towards asceticism."*

§ 79. Narrower and Wider Conception of Good.

But after we have set aside conflicts which are only apparent, or which depend on temporary circumstances, we come to others which seem to have their roots in human nature itself.

(1) We have already seen abundant reason for suspecting hasty attempts at simplification. Particularly we have seen reason to reject the reduction of all morality to self-interest. But the formula which became common in the reaction against it, that "all morality is social," seems no less open to objection if it means that no object except social welfare has any right to whole-hearted devotion. Truth and beauty seem to give the lie to such a simplification, refusing as they do to be treated as mere means to anything beyond themselves. The question is thus forced upon us, have we in truth, beauty, and social good, three separate and independent standards, or can they be shown to be

* *Lectures on Art*, p. 228.

merely different aspects of one embracive standard of human good? I believe the latter is the right answer, but the reasons for this belief can here only be stated in principle, and in the barest outline. The principle is the ultimate unity of human nature not only in spite of, but in and through its diversity. The student of psychology will be prepared to acknowledge the value of this conception. Mind, he has been taught, consists of different apparently irreducible elements, commonly summarised as knowledge, feeling, conation or volition. Yet he has realised the relativity of their independence, the impossiblity of making a section of mental life which fails to reveal strands of all the three. The ethical analysis of needs must follow the same fundamental division. There are needs of the intellectual and the emotional as of the practical part of human nature, but in regard to none of these is it possible to conceive of a stable satisfaction which excludes the satisfaction of the others. To state it in terms of ends or ideals: besides social well-being, which we have seen sums up the practical ideal, there are or should be truth and beauty, which may be taken to sum up the intellectual and æsthetic. But this admission cannot be taken to imply either that any one of these things can have real value apart from the others, or that we could regard with approval a life which made any one of them, to the injury of the others, an exclusive object. While ethics may be as incapable of explaining why human good should contain these different objects of ultimate value as psychology is of explaining why there should be these irreducible elements of mind, it is equally within its right in insisting on the ultimate impossibility of assigning

independent validity to any one of them. Of an art for art's sake, a truth for truth's sake, or a society for society's sake ethics can know nothing. However difficult it may be in particular cases and at particular times to reconcile their claims,* it is not difficult to see how any one of these interests loses from being separated from the whole to which it owes its individual significance. It is certainly legitimate to ask what is society without art and poetry. But it is no less legitimate to ask what are the art and poetry which are not rooted in insight into the fundamental needs of corporate humanity. What holds of art holds of truth. While it is certain that society will come to recognise more and more the value of knowledge, and to delight in it for its own sake, it seems equally certain that the search for truth will more and more derive both inspiration and guidance from contact with the needs both practical and æsthetic of human life. † There is no doubt a real danger of "mixing things." The student *qua* student is not a moralist or a social reformer, nor the moralist and reformer a student. But to exclude momentarily a particular motive from the focus of attention is one thing, to fail in sensitiveness to the subconscious control which it ought to exercise is another.‡

§ 80. **Self-Development and Self-Surrender.**

(2) The same principle of conscious or subconscious

* *Cf.* the present discussion as to the Censorship of the Drama in England as an example of this difficulty (1909).

† It was the knowledge which failed of this contact that B. Jowett referred to when he spoke of a contemporary as "a learned man in the worst sense of the term."

‡ For further explanations on the subject of this section see Appendix D at end.

control by the idea of the whole gives, I believe, the clue to the conflict between self-assertion and self-sacrifice, or, as I should prefer to call it, self-development and self-surrender. Let us first make quite clear what is meant by the terms. Professor Höffding, in the passage already quoted, defines the first as the "energetic striving to develop personality into a work of art such that every moment and every power shall have its appointed place and its due right," identifying this ideal with the "ever basic idea of Greek ethics." The second offers greater difficulty, but we have already in previous discussions gone some way towards a definition. We have seen how self-sacrifice cannot consistently with morality be made an ideal in itself. The ideal must be the realisation or fulfilment of the self in some form. What we must mean, then, in speaking of an ideal of self-sacrifice is the fulfilment of the self in some object of human worth which transcends the individual personality and involves apparent loss to it. The discussion of the previous section has further made it manifest that there are other things besides social good that may be the object of devotion in this sense, and therefore that the antithesis is not adequately expressed as one between self and "others."

So defined, this apparent conflict of ideals has been emphasised by Mr. F. H. Bradley,* who sees in it proof of the essential duality of our moral world.

"To reduce the raw material of one's nature to the highest degree of system, and to use every element from whatever source as a subordinate means to this object is certainly one genuine view of goodness. On the other hand, to widen as far as possible the end to

* *Appearance and Reality*, p. 414.

be pursued and to realise this through the distraction or dissipation of one's own individuality is certainly also good." As in logic we have two standards of truth, internal self-consistency and comprehensiveness, so in ethics we have harmony and extent, and *as both stand upon the same level and claim the mastery with equal right*, the house of human life, both on the intellectual and the moral side, seems to be divided against itself.

We are not concerned with the general conclusion, but with particular ground here alleged for it; and, great as is the responsibility of differing from Mr. Bradley, we must yet ask whether our moral judgments support the claim to equality as between these two ideals? We must of course admit that inner harmony is an essential need of human life.* There is a sense in which it may be said to be the deepest need of all created things and the driving power of the universe. But this does not mean that it may legitimately be made *by itself, apart from a reference to larger "external" ends, into an ideal of life*, nor that it can be realised at all by seeking "to give every power its appointed place," if by "appointment" is meant anything else than *the place the chosen way of life assigns to it*. If there be a truth which our deepest experience seems to substantiate more emphatically than another, it is that the surest way to lose inward harmony is to seek for it as something valuable in itself. Idealism, no less than Hedonism and Christianity itself, has its own paradox: to seek one's life is to lose it, to lose it

* It is not without reason that "harmony in the inward parts" is made the object of the prayer of Socrates in Plato's *Phædrus*, and the inner peace that comes from forgiveness and reconciliation holds a central place in the Lord's Prayer.

is to find it. It is not therefore surprising that Professor Höffding, after stating the ideal in the words quoted above, should raise the question "whether a single person can create for himself a rounded and completed world, and whether, if so, it would be of any value." When he goes on to suggest as the reason for his doubt that "there is a need of devoting oneself," he seems just to stop short of the true explanation. This is not so much the *need* of self-devotion as one added to our other needs, but the absolute necessity of it as a condition of any true self-completion. The truth is that harmony and self-devotion are not two separate ideals at all, but two correlative, though not equally fundamental, aspects of a single ideal. It is therefore a mistake to speak of harmony as though it were something realisable in the abstract apart from a given mode of life which endows it with form and meaning. If we ask, as we have every right to ask, why self-devotion turns out to be self-development and not self-destruction, no answer seems possible except that the world is one and whole, and therefore that there is no one of the substantial objects which claim our devotion that in its attainment does not give us back to ourselves. It is true that owing to our finitude we realise only a very small part of the whole, and there is abundant room for *faith* as to the substance of things unseen. But we also feel that the defect is partly in ourselves, and that a deeper ethical faith would result at once in a more perfect devotion and a more perfect inner harmony.

It is impossible here to follow in detail the logical analogy which is pressed into service in support of the view we have been criticising. It could, I believe, be shown to be on all fours with what has been said above

as to the subordination of inner harmony to outward extent. Self-consistency is, of course, a vital logical interest. There is a sense in which we should be prepared to recognise it as the single standard of truth. But it is equally true that both inspiration and moulding content come from without. Comprehension is the "dominant." Granted the need of harmony as the condition of the stability of a theory, it is only in an atmosphere of constant revision from without that any theory can retain its inward balance. Apart from the outward-directed look—the eye fixed upon the whole—no theory can be safe, but must stand in constant jeopardy,

> "In peril of isolate scorn,
> Unfed of the onward flood." *

"My error has been a good lesson to me," wrote Darwin of one of his few mistaken hypotheses, "to distrust exclusive theory."

The conclusion to which these facts and analogies seem to point is that, so far from bringing ethics to confusion, the antinomy under discussion not less than the others only makes it clearer where we must look for the foundations of the moral life.

* Meredith's *Reading of Earth*. The support which the whole passage gives to the view of this chapter has been pointed out to me by a friend. To Meredith, at any rate,

> "The world is the same seen through,
> The features of men are the same."

CHAPTER III.

FORMS OF THE GOOD.

§ 81. Has our Argument been a Circle?

In what has preceded it is not pretended that we have reached more than a rough statement of the standard of moral judgment. Some of the modifications and corrections which further consideration renders necessary will be the subject of the following book. Meantime we may try to give greater definiteness to our results by bringing them into connection with some of the chief forms of the character and conduct we commonly call good. But, before doing so, I must endeavour to meet an objection which is sure to occur at this point in our argument.

Has not my argument, it may be asked, though developed with all the appearance of consecutive reasoning, only succeeded after all in involving us in a circle? I started out to *explain* moral judgments, in the sense of connecting them with an end to which they may be seen to be organically related. I then defined the end as realisation of self; and finally, to the question, "How is the self realised?" I replied, on behalf of the average man, "By loyalty to the ordinary duties of life: the good parent, the honest worker, the upright citizen." Starting

from good conduct, and professing to explain what this is through the idea of end, I have finished up by defining the end in terms of good conduct. We thus seem, like the heroes of the song, to have merely "marched up the hill, and then marched down again." We have ascended from the idea of good conduct to the idea of end, only to descend again to the idea of good conduct, and are no further on than we were at the beginning.

My first answer is: Granting it to be a circle, it may be none the worse for that, provided it claims to be no more. No one complains of the guide who takes him up the mountain that he takes him back to the starting-point. The journey may have been of value, though he returns at the end of it to the same place. As a matter of fact, the same traveller never does return to the same place. He is "a different man" when he comes back, and the home he comes back to is a "different place." In the same way, it is possible that the reader who has followed this argument may seem to have come back to the point from which he started; but he may have seen a good deal by the way, and may really have come back with a quite different idea of what good conduct really is; *i.e.*, he may have come back to a quite different point.

But the objection is in reality founded on a false view of the nature of the moral end. It proceeds on the assumption that the end in reference to which conduct is judged to have value, the ideal which good conduct aims at realising, is something *to be attained in the long run*, and therefore different from the conduct which leads to it. The end of morality is conceived of as the end of the artist would be. It is something to be produced by

a series of actions, each leading up to a final result, and standing to it in the relation of means to end. The Greeks were not slow to perceive the fallacy of this notion, and at the beginning of his treatise on ethics Aristotle * is careful to point out that the ethical end is attained in the action itself. It is conduct (πρᾶξις), not production (ποίησις). Similarly Christianity recognised that "the kingdom of heaven is within you." Expressed in modern language, this means that the end or ideal in morals is not to be conceived of as "some far-off divine event" which is some day to come to pass. It is daily and hourly realised in the good act itself. Such an act is not a means to a further end; it is itself the end. In its completeness (the purity of its motive, the beneficence or the satisfyingness of its results) the end *is* realised. The good is not something to be hereafter attained; it is attained from moment to moment in the good life itself. Hence some † have been content to define the good as the good will, by which is meant, not a will which acts independently of desire, but the will which under the impulse of the particular desires that from moment to moment form the undercurrent of our daily lives is habitually determined by a more or less consciously conceived idea of a purpose which as something worthy in itself claims its devotion. The truth intended to be emphasised by this mode of expression is thus not that "consequences don't matter," but *first* that the fulfilment that is sought does not exist somewhere, laid up in store for the future, but is found in the quality of life itself; and *secondly* that the moral end is *sui generis* in this, that the distinction of end and means is a distinction within itself,—in

* *Ethics*, I., 1. † *E.g.*, T. H. Green.

other words, has no proper place as a distinction here at all.*

§ 82. Duties, Virtues and Institutions.

Returning to the proper subject of this chapter, if we start from the conception of duties as forms of conduct owed to objects which are moral in the sense of the satisfaction they promise to approved human wants, the previous discussion has prepared us for the recognition of several different ways of regarding them with a view to realising their import. It might be thought that the most obvious way was to group them round the objects themselves. But we have already seen that the objects are infinite in number and variety, "all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth." It would be like trying to classify pleasures round the different objects which we may take pleasure in. There remain two methods—the internal and the external. We may regard duties from the point of view of the qualities of character which lead to their recognition and performance, or of the social institutions which guarantee a field for their exercise. In the former case they are considered subjectively from the point of view of the will itself: in the latter objectively from that of the sphere in which the good will realises itself. It has been suggested† that the latter is the true classification, inasmuch as moral institutions provide us with a ready-made map of the different parts of the moral life. They are "the mode in which morality gives effect to the various wants of mankind." But it has to be remembered that, as we have seen,

* See Appendix D at end.

† As by Mr. Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 253. On the general subject of this section, see Dewey, *Outlines*, pp. 169-74.

corresponding to the system of objective institutions there is a subjective system of impulses and desires, and that the virtues or the aptitudes (ἀρεταί) to restrain and co-ordinate natural instincts, and so give effect to the self as an organic whole, are just as natural a basis of classification as are the institutions which are maintained by means of them.

As a matter of fact, a complete system of ethics would require to exhibit the forms of good under both aspects, as related on the one side to the system of instincts and desires known as human nature, and on the other to the objective moral order, as that is embodied in social institutions. In the one case we should be supplementing our exposition of the principles of ethics by a more or less elaborate psychological account of the springs of action.* In the other case we should be adding to the science of ethics in the stricter sense a sociological account of the principal forms which man, in his efforts after a fuller expression of his true nature, has devised to be the repositories of his moral acquisitions.† Our present purpose of illustrating the conception of the nature of goodness at which we have arrived will be sufficiently served by a short account of some of the outstanding types of virtue. This will be the subject of

* For such an account see, *e.g.*, Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II., pp. 128 foll.

† It is characteristic of German as contrasted with English ethics to have emphasised this side of the moral life. Perhaps this is natural where the state counts for so much and the individual for so little. Yet it is interesting to notice that since these words were written in the first edition of this text the growing recognition of the value of organisation in English and American politics has reflected itself in the greater attention paid in ethical works to the forms which it takes. Cp. What is said above, p. 42 n.

another. But before coming to that it may be useful to devote a section or two to the discussion of the meaning of virtue in general, and the sense in which it is legitimate to distinguish specific forms within it at all.

§ 83. The Meaning of Virtue.

After what has been already said it is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the first of these questions, except to guard against current forms of error. Virtue, we have seen, is the quality of character which secures that action shall be controlled by the idea of the whole. Its opposite, or vice, is the capture of the will through habit by instincts and impulses which, while they may secure a partial or temporary good, are hostile to the good of the whole. In view of this account of it, it is clearly a mistake to identify it, as was done by Kant, with the good in itself. It is quite true that we may set up an ideal of character, courage, self-command, etc., as the supreme object of desire. But we have said sufficient to make it clear that it is only in relation to the concrete circumstances and objects of life that such a character can be of value. Yet it is equally a mistake to treat it, as Utilitarianism tends to do, as a mere means to a *further good*. A character, as Aristotle saw, apart from the activity in which it is embodied, is a mere potentiality; as embodied in action it gives the action a quality as an expression of balanced human nature which is felt to have intrinsic value or to be good in itself. The self is realised *in* it; it does not remain as something to be realised beyond it. Aristotle was right, therefore, in defining happiness or good as "an activity according to virtue," not a further state to which such an activity stood as mere means.

Kindred errors are apt to prevail as to the *naturalness* of virtue.

To the school of Kant virtue is apt to appear solely in the light of an acquired faculty of resistance to inclination. "Before virtue the gods have set toil." On the other hand, to the Utilitarian it is merely a heightened, more intelligent, and more regulated form of natural inclination. In criticism of the first view we have to note that no special value can attach to a quality because it has been the outcome of struggle and discipline. It may say much for the energy and perseverance that has been employed in the process of self-discipline, and thus may represent more *merit**; but these qualities themselves are, to a large extent, natural endowments, and are none the worse but all the better for being so. It can serve no useful purpose, but only introduce confusion into our moral judgments, to treat one who has what M. Arnold called "a genius

* "There seems to be some kind of difficulty in the case: but it amounts only to this. If there be any part of the temper in which ill passions or affections are seated, whilst in another part the affections towards moral good are such as absolutely to master those attempts of their antagonists; this is the greatest *proof* imaginable that a strong principle of virtue lies at the bottom and has possessed itself of the natural temper. Whereas if there be no ill passions stirring, a person may be indeed mere *cheaply virtuous*; that is to say, he may conform himself to the known rules of virtue without sharing so much of a virtuous principle as another. Yet if that other person who has the principle of virtue so strongly implanted comes at last to lose those contrary impediments supposed in him, he certainly loses nothing in virtue; but on the contrary losing only what is vitious in his temper is left more intire to virtue and possesses it in a higher degree."—Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, Bk. I., Pt. ii., § iv. On the distinction between virtue and duty, see Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, Book III., ch. ii., and on the subjects of the succeeding sections, *ibid.*, chs. iii.-x.

for righteousness" as morally inferior to one who has merely a well-cultivated talent.

On the other hand, no recognition of the moral value of moral gifts ought to obscure the essential qualitative difference between the mind that is set, however long-sightedly, on a life of mere self-pleasing, and that fixed identification of the will with some object of permanent and impersonal value which alone constitutes goodness. Here also nothing but theoretical confusion and practical error can come from failing to recognise the distinction and the consequent need in all who are not morally free-born, *i.e.*, in the vast majority of cases, of a real transformation or "conversion" of the natural impulses and inclinations. For most virtue is a new birth—"the turning round of the eye of the soul," as Plato said, "and with it the *whole* soul, from darkness to light, from the transient to the eternal."

§ 84. In what Sense an Enumeration of Virtues is Possible.

From what has been said of the general nature of virtue, it is clear that any attempt at an enumeration of the forms it takes must end in failure. Whether we look at it from the side of the regulation of the impulses and desires, or from the side of the situations in the social world that call for its exercise, it must exhibit forms and degrees as infinite as the passions to be regulated or the situations which have to be adequately met. The most that is possible is to fix on some broad distinctions which, like the "cardinal points" in the compass, may be taken as the basis of any more detailed consideration that circumstances, theoretical or practical, may require. That the selection

may be of any use it is essential that it should follow the organic parts or elements—that we should, as Plato required, make our division "at the joints." No grouping founded, for instance, on relative importance can carry us more than a very short way, seeing that the relative importance of the virtues varies, not only from age to age in the history of the world, but from class to class in any one community, and even from individual to individual. Each age has had its cardinal (or papal) virtue. Among the Greeks and Romans it was courage, or manliness (ἀρετή, *virtus*); among the early Christians it was charity; in the middle ages, chivalry; in the eighteenth century, benevolence; to-day, perhaps, it is what Mr. Leslie Stephen calls "organic justice." Similar differences will be found in the relative importance of the virtues to different classes and different individuals, according to the nature of their calling or the temptations that the strength or weakness of particular passions brings with it.

Scarcely less superficial is the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. If, as has been contended, self and society are related to each other rather as universal and particular than as two separate particular things, it is clear that there are no virtues which relate simply to the one or the other. Prudence and self-control are no doubt essential conditions of self-fulfilment, but so also are justice and charity. Justice and charity are essential conditions of effective social service, but so also are prudence and self-control. There is the further defect of this as an exhaustive distinction that it assigns no place to virtues such as sincerity in scientific or artistic work, which are not directly related either to self or others.

Aristotle doubtless indicated a true "joint" when he distinguished between "intellectual" and "moral" excellence, but it is doubtful whether he added clearness to his treatment by going on to enumerate groups of separate virtues under each of these heads. It is surely quite arbitrary to class prudence in the narrow sense of self-regard as an intellectual virtue, while insisting in his treatment of the ethical virtue of courage that what constitutes it a virtue at all is the degree of civic intelligence that underlies it. Discretion, proverbial philosophy among ourselves teaches, "is the better part of valour," to which it might have added the converse that valour is the better part of wisdom or discretion, seeing that it is equally true that

> "He wants wit who wants resolved will
> To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better."

Nor is it necessary to insist in these days that the "other-regarding" virtues of justice * and charity presuppose the intellectual virtues of thoughtfulness, and consideration, or that any attempts to separate them from each other or to limit their spheres must be fatal to the spirit of both of them. There is good reason to distrust a humanity which is severed from the homelier virtue of family affection: "charity begins at home." But it is no less true that love of humanity is the best guarantee against the exclusiveness which turns family affection into a vice. Similarly proverbial philosophy goes a step in the right direction in insisting that justice must come "before" generosity. But justice no less presupposes generosity, which is only justice adequately conceived. To St. Augustine justice was *ordo amoris*, to Leibniz it was *caritas sapientis*.

* As commonly depicted, justice is *blinded*, not *blind*.

It is, of course, the "adequate conception" which adds the splendour to the act which we indicate by calling it generous. The man who publishes the ruin of the company in which he holds most of the stock might be said to be generous to the public. He is only just, but he has an adequate conception of what justice implies.

§ 85. Plato's Classification.

It is for these reasons that ethical writers have found unfailing truth and suggestiveness in the ancient treatment of the leading types of virtue under certain cardinal heads representing rather different yet essentially related sides of our nature than separable traits of character. It was thus that they presented themselves to Plato, who seems to have been the first to propose the grouping under the heads of Temperance, Courage, and Wisdom, with Justice as a unifying principle among them. Without attributing to Plato any precise anticipation of modern psychology, we may without straining take the enumeration as corresponding in the main to its distinction of the elements of human nature with feeling, will, and intelligence. His treatment has a further advantage in its recognition of the essential fluidity of these ideas. So far is this carried that it is sometimes difficult to perceive where the line of division comes,* and we are left in the end in some doubt as to which of the names whole-mindedness (σοφρωσύνη), manliness (ἀνδρεία), wisdom (σοφία), or justice (δικαιοσύνη) best expresses to his own mind the fundamental unity of human nature at its best. A third advantage of

* See especially the well-known passage in *Republic*, Book III., p. 429 C., where courage is defined as a species of "safe-keeping" "in moments of pain and pleasure, of desire and of fear."

Plato's treatment is that it sets the virtues before us as primarily "qualities of society,"* and thus forms an excellent corrective of the modern tendency to treat them as the home-marked product of individual development. It is true that he seems to effect this socialisation by assigning separate virtues to the different classes in his State, and thereby to sin against their essential unity. But this severance is clearly not meant to be pressed beyond the recognition of the relativity of the value of any particular excellence of character to station and circumstances.

It is for these reasons that I desire what follows to be taken in close connection with the Platonic analysis of which it is little more than an adaptation.

* See B. Bosanquet's *Companion to Plato's Republic.*

CHAPTER IV.

CARDINAL VIRTUES.

§ 86. Temperance.

Of the cardinal virtues mentioned in the last chapter, the first two may be taken together as having to do with feeling and emotion, particularly with pleasure and pain. They may be said to represent the negative and the positive, the defensive and the aggressive, the vigilant and the militant side of good character respectively. If, as Professor Dewey says, courage is "pre-eminently the executive side of every virtue," temperance may be said to be the regulative.

The word temperance itself suggests restraint, and in its modern use has been narrowed down to restraint of one particular bodily appetite. The first step in understanding its significance is to return to the old English meaning of command of the passions and impulses in general.* But the second is equally important: to cease to think of it as merely restraint or moderation at all. "Moderation in all things" may be as much of a vice as immoderation in one or in all. We have already

* "What, are you chafed? Ask God for temperance" (*Henry VIII.*, Act I., sc. i.).

rejected the idea of harmony in the abstract as a definition of the moral ideal. For the same reason we must reject the idea of an abstract golden mean.* Self-restraint, like the harmony of which we have seen it is the negative condition, draws its significance from the positive purpose of the individual life. It cannot, therefore, be a mere indiscriminate moderation. The essence of it is economy of energy. And just as economy in the ordinary sense is valueless save as the husbanding of resources for some positive end—in itself an expense, judged by ordinary standard, it may be, an "extravagance"—so with the moderation which has not for its principle the concentration of energy on what a man selects as worth spending himself upon. Apart from such an "intention" economy is mere cheese-paring, moderation mere inefficiency. There is a time to gather and a time to scatter abroad.

In all this Plato's conception of temperance, which is much more akin to the whole-heartedness of self-devotion than the half-heartedness of self-repression, is a useful corrective of modern ideas. On the other hand, we are apt to miss in the classical treatment of this virtue the note of inwardness which it was the mission of Christianity to import into the idea. In the demand for inward purity we have not only an extension of the area that is covered by it, but a recognition of the vital truth that temperance of act is rooted in temperance of thought. It is true that in the middle ages this demand founding

* While Horace's "golden mediocrity" (*Od.* II. 10), is open to this criticism, Aristotle's conception of virtue "as a mean determined by reason or proportion" is not. The difference is that to Aristotle the "proportion" depends on a man's function or purpose in life, to Horace on his capacity for enjoyment.

itself on false other-worldly motives took extravagant forms, and that the ecclesiastical conception herein calls for correction. What modern ethics cannot afford to lose sight of is the real gain that is represented by it. The problem it has before it may be said to be the vitalising of the ideal of an all-permeating inward control of the thoughts and affections by bringing it into touch with the inspiration which comes from some adequate idea of what human life can be at its best. It is as treason to this that all forms of intemperance stand condemned. We have had occasion in a former chapter to criticise the moral optimism which looks forward to a decreasing call for strenuousness of moral purpose.* Equally ungrounded is the pessimism which prophesies the weakening of the foundations of self-restraint as the older motives cease to operate. Temperance in the proper sense of the word is, we have contended, a function of our view of what is valuable in life. It surely would be a paradox if in a time when we are beginning first fully to realise in imagination the richness of human possibilities, concern for the condition under which alone these riches can be realised in fact should be found to be on the wane.

87. Courage.

The same principles apply to courage, which we have seen may be called the positive aspect of temperance. If the latter may be defined as the power of resisting the seduction of false pleasure and excitement, courage may be called the power of resisting the diverting forces of pain and fear in the absence of external exciting stimulus. If temperance corresponds to rigidity, courage

* P. 159.

corresponds to inward energy or inertia. It exhibits itself, like temperance, in an infinite variety of forms, of which the most outstanding are fortitude or endurance of pain; constancy or perseverance in difficulty—the power of carrying on under the persecution of petty pains and obstructions; and bravery or courage proper, the inward uplifting or *élan* that launches on a dangerous enterprise. But the essence of all of them, as Plato saw, is that they depend on the "heart" put into a man, not by mere instinctive reaction, as in rage, or by insensitiveness to pain and danger, as in foolhardiness, but by a true "opinion" or estimate of the relative worth of things. The courageous man is self-possessed; courage is "keeping one's head."

While thus essentially right in its analysis of courage as a form of loyalty to an ideal object in the face of pain and danger, the ancient account has been rightly criticised * as taking too narrow a view of the actions in which the highest form of courage may be manifested. It is therefore necessary to supplement it by noticing that, according to the account above given of virtue in general, it may obviously take endless forms corresponding to the endless variety of objects which a good man may set before himself and the obstructions which he may meet with in carrying them through. Some of the more characteristically modern of these, such as the combating of disease, the advancement of science, the improvement of social conditions, willingness to give up ingrained and comfortable convictions out of loyalty to truth are no whit behind the battle-field or the watch in the call they make upon the vital powers of a man.

* See esp. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bk. III., c. 5, and my own *Chapters from Aristotle's Ethics*, pp. 109 foll.

It is unnecessary to dwell on this extension of the field of courage, but perhaps we ought not to leave the subject without noting one particular form of the virtue, which is likely to gain prominence as the necessity of combating the disheartenment, that is apt to come with new and bewildering conceptions of our world and its destiny, comes to be more widely recognised. The growth of science and culture has expanded our ideas on these subjects out of all recognition. In place of our earth as the centre of the universe assigned for a limited time as the abode of a divinely favoured race of beings, we are asked to conceive of it as an infinitesimal point in a boundless ocean of space, the sport of uncontrollable powers, and overshadowed by an unknown destiny. Clearly such a revolution cannot take place without making a new call on the human spirit which has to adjust itself to it. We shall return to this at the end of the present chapter. Meantime I mention it in order to bring home from this side also the futility of the view that sees in modern circumstances a decreasing call upon the more heroic qualities in human nature.

§ 88. Justice.

The name differs from those of the other virtues in denoting both the ideal or type of character and the system of institutions and acts whereby effect is given to it. It is with the first meaning that we are chiefly concerned. But even here there is an ambiguity noticed by the earliest writers according as it is used for goodness or righteousness in general, "complete virtue," as Aristotle expressed it, "with the addition that it is displayed towards others,"* or in the narrower sense

* *Ethics*, V., i., 15.

of fairness or impartiality, a "part," or as we should now say an aspect of virtue. Finally, in this narrower sense it comes before us in different forms, according as it means impartiality in view of the letter or of the spirit of the law, or again (leaving the legal point of view altogether) appeals to an ideal of what human nature ought to be. What unites all these different meanings is the reference in them all to the idea of a *whole* whose permanent nature must be the motive and standard of action as opposed to the preferences and partialities of individuals founded on carnal feelings and impulses. The differences in them depend upon the particular point of view from which the whole is regarded.

Seeing that, as we have agreed, the essence of all virtue is the control of action by the idea of the whole, it is not surprising that the name which indicates this reference most clearly should be taken as it is by Plato, and in the old English use of the word "just," as synonymous with goodness in general. With this use we are not here concerned, except as an illustration of the truth of our general contention as to the universal implication of moral judgment. The more special senses of the name, on the other hand, are interesting as corresponding respectively to the different degrees of depth with which the claims of the whole are apprehended.

1. We have already seen how these claims may be read off most simply in the laws and settled institutions that prevail at any time. Corresponding to this fact, we have the acts and decisions which go by the name of *legal justice*, and the form of character of which they are the expression. This judicial impartiality is a great

advance on early ethical ideals, and modern survivals founded on class bias or upon individual good feeling or private gratitude;* but in so far as its outlook is limited by the mere generality of law and custom, so far as it regards the form rather than the spirit of the law, it necessarily falls short of the true ideal of justice. The law or rule is necessarily general, but in actual justice we are always dealing with the individual whose nature and circumstances have to be taken into account. Seeing that the whole is a whole of parts, which differ in nature and function just in so far as they are true parts, the rule for one can never be the rule for another without contradicting the very idea of justice.†

2. Corresponding, therefore, to the "correction of justice" known in law as equity, we have a higher form of the virtue which is rooted not in mere negative impartiality, but in imaginative sympathy with the character and circumstances of the part. So conceived, justice is the quality which "makes allowance for human weakness, looking not to the law but to the meaning of the lawgiver, not to the act but to the intention, not to the part but to the whole, not to what a man is at the moment, but to what he is as a rule."‡ Here clearly we are passing to an altogether new conception of justice, which, when the writer adds that it "remembers benefits received rather than injuries that have been suffered and benefits received rather

* See Miss Addams's suggestive article on "Ethical Survivals in Municipal Corruption" in *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. viii., p. 273.

† It is in this sense that *summum ius* is *summa iniuria*.

‡ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I., c. xiii., § 17. The Greek word for this form of justice is ἐπιείκεια, Matthew Arnold's "sweet reasonableness.

than benefits conferred, it is patient under injustice, it is readier to appeal to reason than to force," is difficult to distinguish from the Christian principle of love or charity.

3. This identity becomes still more unmistakable when we advance a further step, and realise that the law itself may fail to represent the true nature of the whole by failing to give free scope to the possibilities of the parts; and that there may be an appeal from the whole form of the existing law to another that will give fuller play to essential elements in human nature. So far as this is so, a new form of justice sometimes spoken of as "ideal justice" emerges founded on sympathetic insight into what both part and whole may be when they have come into their own, and on the whole-hearted desire to see these possibilities realised in fact.

But if justice and charity are thus in essence identical, how, we may ask, have they come in popular thought to be opposed to each other? How are we to interpret the popular outcry, which is so marked a feature of our present time, "Justice, not charity"? The reason is to be found not in any essential difference between these two virtues, but in the fact that we have fallen away from the true idea of charity, and that in two respects. Charity speaks in the name of the whole. Its right to be at all is founded on its representing the underlying desire of the community as a whole for the welfare of the parts. So soon, then, as it arrogates to itself any private sphere, or claims any private merit, any return of gratitude or subservience from the individuals benefited, charity forfeits its ethical right, and therewith loses all its grace. It is only another side of this defect when charity is identified with mere giving, irrespective of

the effect upon the character of the individual and upon the community at large. The justification of the gift, whatever be its form and whoever be the administrator, is the maintenance or the furtherance of the citizen spirit in the recipient. Anything that loses sight of this, so far from being a virtue, must be classed as a particularly pernicious form of self-indulgence. It is the corruption of charity in this respect more than anything else that is responsible at the present time for the disrepute into which both private and poor-law charity have fallen.

The correction of these failures has to be sought not in the endeavour to exclude the spirit of charity, which is only another word for civic friendship directed towards individuals or particular groups, from the work of reform, but to permeate it with the spirit of justice or sympathetic insight into the needs of the community as a whole.

Yet, when all is said, justice lays on the modern conscience no light responsibility. To give adequate expression to its ideal in the practical life of a modern community it is necessary, as we have seen, to look below the surface, and to realise possibilities, to see through the actually existing order to that of which it is an imperfect embodiment. But it is just this that our material civilisation, with its complexities and apparent fixities, makes it so difficult to do. On the one hand we have a vague unrest coming from the consciousness of capacities which have no adequate outlet, powers of enjoyment which there is no means of satisfying; on the other a want of insight and imagination which makes it difficult for more fortunate classes to realise the reality and power of the spiritual forces that underlie

the material structure of civilisation. Even where there are signs, as there undoubtedly are at present, of a quickening of imagination on the one hand and a definite direction of aspiration to valuable attainable objects on the other, there remains the extraordinary difficulty of giving effect to new ideas, with our imperfect stock of knowledge, and our imperfect organisation to utilise such knowledge as we have. The discussion of the practical problem here indicated is beyond the scope of these chapters. The mention of it was necessary to enable the student to realise how the modern conception of Justice has deepened, and in deepening has been brought into closer unity with the insight and Wisdom that are necessary to give effect to it.

§ 89. Wisdom.

The place of the fourth of Plato's types should by this time be fairly clear. Our difficulty in the previous discussion has been not to bring it into evidence, but to keep it out of the foreground. Virtue in general we have found to have its roots in an ideal relation between whole and part. It is the observance of a *logos*, ratio or proportion between them: on the one hand the development of power, on the other its subordination to the idea or purpose of the whole. Temperance, if not rightly defined as moderation, is at least modulation, permeation of the natural and acquired impulses by a form which gives them significance and beauty. Courage is self-possession. Justice rests ultimately on the power of seeing the whole in the part, the recognition of the claims which the idea of a true participation in the life of the whole gives the individual.

It was this idea of moral goodness as a species of fine art, controlled both in conception and execution, after the analogy of the handicrafts, by right thinking or reason, that was the imperishable contribution to ethics of Greek philosophy. It was stamped upon it at the outset by the Socratic doctrine that "virtue is knowledge"—"an aspect of the truth," as Jowett says, "which was lost almost as soon as it was found; and yet has to be recovered by every one for himself who would pass the limits of proverbial and popular philosophy."*

In the form in which Socrates left it, it contained an element of paradox which was a stumbling-block to his immediate successors. He seemed to be insisting on mere intellectual knowledge as the essential element in goodness, and thus on the one hand to be ignoring the possibility of knowing good and choosing evil, and on the other to be laying down conditions which made virtue the exclusive possession of a few. What he really meant to assert was the essential rationality of goodness as obedience to the law of life, and as a consequence the necessity of understanding what this law is and what it requires in a given situation. The central interest of Greek ethical philosophy in his great successors is the process by which this fundamental truth is purified of the admixture of paradox, and set in relief as a permanent gain of philosophical reflection.†

Not only is virtue in general defined by Aristotle as the habit of choosing the mean "as reason or wisdom would define it," but the habit of moral judgment has a

* *Dialogues of Plato*, Introduction to the "Protagoras."

† See the author's *Chapters from Aristotle's Ethics*, pp. 136 foll.

central place assigned to it as the organising principle of the moral life as a whole.

Modern ethics is only giving a new expression to these conclusions when it emphasises the place of "conscientiousness" in all real goodness, insisting that "Of all the habits which constitute the character of an individual, the habit of judging moral situations is the most important, for this is the key to the *direction*, and to the remaking of all the other habits."*

Yet there is one important respect in which our ideas of what is implied in the virtue of wisdom have deepened since Aristotle wrote his famous analysis. Wisdom and knowledge meant to the Greek, as we have seen, insight into the true ends of life, and the power of giving effect to that insight through careful attention to the details of action. To the Greek there could be little doubt as to what that end was or wherein its value consisted. It lay before him and about him in the many-sided, absorbing life of his city-state. He walked, it might be said, by sight. But, as we have also seen, the "ideal object" has come with us through a variety of influences to be conceived of as far wider and deeper than anything that can be expressed in terms of mere civic life. In this process of widening and deepening it has tended to fade out of direct vision. It is a city, if not in the heavens, at any rate only fragmentarily discernible upon earth, and requiring, if it is to remain an operative idea, to be kept before the eye of the mind by an effort of constructive imagination.

It is for this reason that it is possible now, in a way that it was not possible in the time of Socrates, to have

* Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 418.

doubt cast on the validity of the whole idea of an objective moral order, and therewith on the ultimate value of the things that are usually considered most worth living for, and to maintain that to the human virtue of reason or insight there has to be added the divine or "theological" virtue of Faith in order to give the necessary stability to our moral world. Ethics may prefer to treat the difference as one between different degrees of insight. But it need have no real difficulty in accepting this extension of the list of Cardinal virtues, provided that *first* it be made perfectly plain that the divinity to which appeal is made is to be interpreted as the power inherent in goodness itself that secures its predominance over evil, and *second*, that faith be conceived of not as something opposed to wisdom and knowledge, but as belief in the value of the objects towards which wisdom and knowledge are directed. How such a faith is to be acquired and sustained we have already seen to be one of the chief problems of modern life. This is not the place to discuss it in detail, but the suggestion may be hazarded that we are likely to go wrong if we look for the grounds of moral faith in anything outside morality itself, and that it may be part of the wisdom of life to believe that it will be justified of its own children. If it is not strictly true, as Socrates would have it, that to know the good is to do it, it may very well be true that to *do* the good is the best way of *knowing* it.* There are perhaps some whose philosophy carries them no further than Charles Darwin, who, speaking of this ultimate problem, wrote, "The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is

* Gospel of St. John, c. vii., v. 17.

beyond the scope of man's intellect; but man can do his duty." * But there are others who, like Professor Höffding, will ask "whether this is the last word of human thought," or whether "the possibility that man can do his duty does not suppose that the conditions of life allow of continuous ethical striving, so that there is a certain harmony between cosmic order and human ideals." †

* *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 307.

† *Darwin and Modern Science*, p. 464.

BOOK V

MORAL PROGRESS

CHAPTER I.

THE STANDARD AS RELATIVE.

§ 90. The Problem of Relativity.

We have hitherto treated moral judgments on the general assumption that there is only one good and one right, which is the same for all. Subject to what has been said in § 78, the moral standard has been conceived of as something fixed and absolute, and even worked out into some detail in a system of virtues and duties representing the outline of a common ideal. Within this fixed standard indeed we have recognised differences. Thus it was pointed out that, inasmuch as the form under which each realises himself is prescribed for him by his station and its duties, this must be different for different classes and for different individuals. But this may be called a difference flowing from the very nature of the standard as a social one, rather than a difference in the standard itself. It is merely a difference of emphasis among duties which all recognise, and need not cause any further difficulty.

It is only a variety of this when different standards appear to co-exist in the same individual. Thus, on

being asked for advice, a man may reply, "Do you ask me as a lawyer (doctor, stockbroker, etc.), or as a friend?"* No more difficulty, however, need be caused by this than by the other. The man of many standards will probably admit, when closely pressed, that "a man's a man for a' that," and that there is a supreme standard which applies to him as sharing that distinction with his neighbours.

Nor is the absoluteness of the standard, as hitherto defined, affected by the kind of differences which, as distinguished from differences of standard, we may call differences within the standard. The standard of morality in a circle of racing-men or of horse-dealers is different from that recognised by a Christian congregation. Even within the latter there will be differences, as between those who permit themselves to smuggle silk or tobacco at the Custom House or to take a ticket in a raffle-sale, and those who do not. Yet the difference is more apparent than real. It is the result of local depressions rather than of serious divergence of standard. In the case of the horse-dealer and the raffler, the higher standard is rather latent than non-existent, as is shown by the fact that it is possible to convict them of inconsistency and convert them.

It is the *comparative study of the moral codes of different times and countries* that first reveals the fact that the standard is relative in the sense that at this stage will be apt to make a difficulty for the student. Not to go beyond historical times and the civilised nations of Europe, it is well known that, among the early Greek communities, the exposure of infants who were weak or

* *Cp.* the amusing passage in W. James's *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I., pp. 294-6.

deformed was not only deemed consistent with humanity, but advocated as necessary for the maintenance of the community and in the interests of morality. In the middle ages persecution for religious opinion differing from that of the majority was not only permitted, but approved of as a highly commendable form of zeal for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. At the present day, on the other side of the Channel, leading statesmen may meet in duel with the intent to maim or to kill without in any way losing caste or outraging the public conscience.

Nor is this variation in the standard in different times and countries confined to virtues which, like humanity, toleration, sense of honour, might be regarded as of secondary importance for the maintenance of society: it extends also to those which are usually regarded as primary, and as lying at the foundation of all social life. The children at Sparta were taught to steal: in the well-known story of the child who stole a fox and permitted it to tear his bosom rather than let it be discovered, the crime was, not to steal, but to be found out. In the lives of the saints among the Turks, as Locke reminds us in his celebrated chapter entitled "No Innate Practical Principles," the primary virtue of chastity seems to have had no place.

In respect to these and similar varieties of standard, it is not, of course, enough to say that all respectable people condemn these anomalies. The point is that they are not anomalies, and that "all respectable people" in the time and country in which they were practised approved them. It would be a gross historical injustice to apply our own standards in such cases. The virtue of the Spartan boy must be judged by his own standard, not

by that of the shiny-faced urchin who creeps unwillingly to school in an English village: so judged, it is heroic. We have to recognise that in this sense goodness *is* a different thing in different times and countries.

Is there then, it might be asked, no such thing as an absolute standard of morality? Is morality not one, but many and different? And are those justified who, upon the basis of the latter hypothesis, draw the practical conclusion that, as opposed to what is "conventional" or "expedient" for a community, there is no such thing as "right"?

§ 91. The Unity of the Form of Virtue.

The previous course of our argument has prepared us for at least a partial answer to the question thus raised. At the very outset it was shown that morality cannot consist in obedience to a fixed code of rules. As opposed to this view, we saw that it is the conduct prescribed by an *end* other than the momentary satisfaction of desire, an end which may indifferently be described as the fulfilment or realisation of the self as a whole, or as the maintenance according to opportunity of the social system,* which is only the other or objective side of this integral or better self. This end is the principle of unity which underlies and "explains" the manifold imperatives in which the moral law expresses itself, inasmuch as it is the common root or stem of which, as the last chapter tried to show, they are exfoliations.

Applying this principle to the question before us, we

* Or again the world of intellectual or æsthetic values. See p. 194.

may see that, underlying the apparent diversities in the contents of the moral standard, there is at least a real unity of form. Wherever we have moral judgment approving a line of conduct as good, whether among the rudest band of savages or in those circles which in the most highly moralised countries in the world recognise the highest moral standard, it is seen to rest upon a more or less consciously recognised contrast between a permanent and a transient self: between the satisfaction of a higher, or true self, and of a lower, or apparent one.

The savage who, when the enemy's hamlet has been taken by his tribe and the booty is in his power, instead of seizing the largest share he can and escaping to the solitary enjoyment of it in the woods, restrains his impulse in order to await his chief's own choice, and the subsequent distribution by the lot, is moved, however obscurely, by the idea of a larger or social self which at this stage is represented by the rudely organised society of the nomadic tribe. Or to revert to our previous illustration: the Spartan boy is approved by the judgment of his time and country because he sacrifices the pleasure-seeking, pain-avoiding self, who would have done with the matter by throwing away the fox, to an idea of a higher good, which he represents to himself perhaps as "pluck" or "endurance," but which has value only in so far as it is related to a moral order, loyalty to which the boy recognises as part of his true self.

From these examples it will be seen that, while it is undoubtedly true that morality differs from age to age and under different circumstances, it springs in every age and country from the same root; in other words,

while its matter or content varies, its form or essence remains the same.*

§ 92. The Relativity of the Standard as Condition of its Validity.

But we may go further than this. For it further follows from the argument in the previous chapters that the relativity of the moral standard is not only compatible with the existence of a law which is absolute for each in his special circumstances, but is a necessary condition of the obligatoriness of morality and the validity of moral judgment. We have already seen how this is so, within certain limits, with respect to individuals living in the same age and country. "Duty" for each was seen to be relative to his station and circumstances. It is this relativity which makes it duty for *me*. A law which did not apply to me, in virtue of my place in the organism of society, could not be binding upon me at all. It is only an extension of the same principle to say that it is because morality is always, and in all places, relative to circumstances, that it is binding at any time and in any place. The idea that it is otherwise comes from our

* The above argument may be further illustrated from the beginnings of morality in sub-human forms of life. In these, as in the devotion of the outpost elephant or white ant to the interest of the group, we have a shadow of human morality Nature is dreaming of morality. What makes the difference, of course, is the power of conceiving the higher or common good. In saying so, I do not intend to deny that the lower animals may have the rudiments of such a conception of a higher self. All I mean is, that it is the possession of such a rudimentary conception, and not the mere empirical fact that the lower animals exhibit such conduct, that justifies us in speaking of sub-human justice, or any other sub-human virtue.

habit of conceiving of the moral law as isolated from the social circumstances in which it rose, and as therefore varying arbitrarily in different times and countries. The error is corrected by recollecting that the variations we are discussing are not accidental, but are organically related to the circumstances of the time to which they severally belong.

Thus, to go no further than our previous instances, the practice of exposing infants (especially females *) was justified at a time when it was necessary (or, which comes to the same thing, was supposed to be necessary), in order to maintain that peculiar form of city-state which flourished in Greece and Italy. When the circumstances changed, when city-states had perished, when higher ideas of the position of women began to prevail, and when it came to be felt that the outrage to humanity that was involved in the practice was a greater social evil than the burden thrown upon the community by the necessity of maintaining an apparently useless population, not only was exposure discountenanced, but the public conscience was awakened to the duty of making provision for their support.† Similarly, intolerance dates from a time when, owing to the intimate relations between State and Church (*e.g.*, in the oaths of soldiers), it seemed to be of vital importance that no religious scruples of non-conformists (*e.g.*, of the Christian soldiers in the Roman armies) should interfere with the due performance of social obligations. Intolerance ceased to be a virtue, and began to pass over into the opposite

* See Merivale's *History of the Roman Empire*, Vol. V., pp. 56 and 303 *n*.

† See the Law of Constantine, quoted, Gibbon, II., p. 142 (Smith's edition).

category,* when, among other changes, it began to be seen that freedom of thought contributes more to the common good than any artificial unity of religious belief As, then, the form of social life varies from age to age in the course of natural evolution, morality, which, as we have seen (if it is to be morality in the proper sense, and not mere blind obedience to a traditional law), must represent "a quality of the social tissue," must vary with it.

§ 93. Further Difficulty.

But it may be felt that this answer is only partial and does not altogether meet the difficulty. Granted that there is a unity of form underlying the variations in the matter of moral obligation,† and, further, that the variations are a necessary incident in anything that can rightly be called a moral standard, a further question still remains. If the social changes on which the variations spoken of depend are themselves only accidental circumstances dependent on the effort to adapt structure to environment (and hitherto little has been said to prove in detail ‡ that they are not), morality comes, after all, to be nothing but that kind of conduct which supports one or other of the accidental changes in the phantasmagoria of social forms. It is much, of course, to have established this underlying unity in varieties of standard, and to have proved that "the good" for the individual depends upon the good of the society of

* *Cp.* the definition of badness as a *survival*, Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 307. On the whole subject of this chapter and book the student is recommended to consult Book III. in the same work.

† Which is here "form," which "matter"? The meaning would have been expressed equally well by substituting substance for form and form for content. The modern distinction between "intent" and "content" would perhaps best express the meaning.

‡ What follows must be read in connection with § 67 above.

which he is a member. But if these "goods" are only, after all, varieties of adaptation to environment ultimately determined by natural causes, and are not united with one another in any order so as to suggest the idea of a universal or absolute good, there is, after all, no ground for the obligation to adopt the moral standard of any one of them rather than of another, except the accidental circumstance that our inherited aptitudes probably fit us for the conditions of life which obtain in that into which we have been born rather than those of any other. And, if this be so, morality turns out, after all, to be relative in the sense for which the sceptic contends—viz., of resting upon no objective and universal moral order, but only upon one which is relative to the effects of accidental, in the last resort mechanically determined circumstances.

The difficulty here suggested is a real one. It may be seen to involve two distinct questions which press for an answer in the interest of the higher forms of practical morality, perhaps of religion itself: is there any discernible unity of principle in the changes of social forms to which morality is related—any relativity, so to speak, of relativities? Granted there is, what is its relation to individuality? Both of these questions, indeed, remind us of what was said in an earlier chapter of the impossibility of separating ethics from the study of the nature of the world as a whole, and man's relation to it. Nor, as we shall see, shall we be able altogether to escape without paying tribute to the spectre of metaphysics. Meantime, however, it may be possible to avoid coming face to face with it, and to carry our account of the rationale of moral judgment a step further than we have hitherto done, by confining ourselves strictly to the former of these two questions.

CHAPTER II.

THE STANDARD AS PROGRESSIVE.

§ 94. Clue to Solution of the Problem in Idea of Progress.

THE question with which we ended the last chapter may be stated in a form which will make its connection with the results of our previous analysis plain to the reader.

In seeking for an explanation of moral judgments, we traced them back to a principle of unity variously described as the end, standard, or ideal of conduct, in the light of which they were seen to be organically related to one another and to the life of man as a social being. A new difficulty, however, rose when, on further investigation, we found that, in place of one universally recognised standard, there seemed to exist a bewildering variety. We were thus driven to ask whether this variety must be accepted as an ultimate fact, or whether all these different standards may not be susceptible of explanation in the same sense as the variety of the moral judgments under any one standard was found to be, by being shown to have their place as mutually related parts or phases of an organic whole.

Is there, in a word, any larger conception of morality possible than that implied in the definition of it as a quality of the social tissue at any one time or place, in the light of which we may be enabled to establish a relation between conduct that supports any particular moral order, and some more universal end or purpose traceable in human history?

For the clue to the answer to the question, when so stated, we have not far to look. It is given in the conception of *progress* rendered familiar to us by modern science. Progress means change estimated in terms of approximation to an end,—the end being the principle of unity which harmonises and explains the successive steps. History, as contrasted with annals or chronicles, is the record, not simply of change, but of development. Science, moreover, has made us familiar, not only with the idea, but also with the law of development.

§ 95. Illustration of the General Law of Progress.

Evolution, says Herbert Spencer, is the process whereby "an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity is transformed into a definite, coherent heterogeneity," profusely illustrating it in the fields of biology and social life. Neglecting qualifications of this formula, we may interpret the general course of biological evolution from organisms such as the amœba, which are homogeneous and almost structureless, through fishes and reptiles, to the highly differentiated structures of the mammals, and finally of man. A similar progress is traceable in the development of the social organism. At first this is simple and undifferentiated; all the members alike fish, and hunt, and fight. But with all its homogeneity, it is still a loose organisation, with

little internal coherence. The functions are not specialised, the parts are comparatively independent of one another. With division of labour comes greater differentiation into castes and classes, and at the same time greater interdependence, greater unity and coherence, as these become mutually dependent on one another. As evolution proceeds, the different forms of industry again differentiate into smaller groups or specialised industries. Similarly, the military forces are separated into departments, as of the home and foreign service, the army and the navy, etc.; the government into central and municipal, and each again into an infinity of subordinate departments.*

§ 96. Progress of Humanity as a Whole.

A process similar to that which takes place among individual nations may be seen to be taking place in the world at large, and in the human race as a whole. For the purpose we have in hand, it is indifferent how we describe this process.† For the present it is sufficient to note that history, at least in the West, bears witness to it. The different nations that have successively occupied the foreground on the stage have not left it before they have contributed their share to the sum-total of the elements that enter into the constitution of society as we know it. Thus it is pointed out, *e.g.*, by Comte, that the earliest period, which he calls the Fetichist,

* On the subject of this and the following section see E. Durkheim's excellent *De la Division du Travail Social.*

† Hegel conceived of it as the evolution of Freedom, by which he meant not freedom of the individual from social control, but freedom from the control of lower elements in human nature in so far as they obstruct the development of the higher. This may involve a large increase of social control, as modern nations are discovering.

presents us with the elements of the family along with the first ideas of property and settled industry. Greek civilisation, which Comte in like manner analyses as a type of the second or Polytheistic period, but which has received more appreciative treatment from German thinkers, brought the free, self-governing city to a high pitch of perfection. Rome, it has frequently been pointed out, contributed the conception of law and order and, by exhausting the régime of *offensive* militarism, prepared the way for a union of Western Europe under the moral conceptions supplied by Christian Theism. Under the influence of Feudalism and the mediæval Church, women take a new position, slaves become serfs, serfs become the agricultural labourers and the city employés of modern times, with at least the elements of freedom. The growth of trade and settled industry caused the rise of the middle class and paved the way for the transition from the military to the industrial period of the world's history. When the time was ripe these new forces asserted themselves against the restraints of the Feudal System. The middle classes obtained recognition as an integral part of the body-politic, and in the anarchy of transition powerful weapons were placed in the hands of the working classes by the freedom of the press, of public meeting, and of trade combination, finally by extensions of the franchise, through the aid of which they have rapidly advanced to a position from which they are able to claim their share in the heritage of Western civilisation.

It is not necessary to strain the meaning of the law formulated above to see that it applies to this evolution also. If, to go no further back, we take the state of Europe in the eighteenth century, previous to the outbreak of the

French Revolution and the modern national movement, we may be said to have the elements of the new order held in solution, and constituting a relatively homogeneous whole under the nominal sway of the successors of the Cæsars. The changes that have since taken place may be represented, first, as a movement of disruption and disintegration, secondly, as one of consolidation. The former may be said to have begun in the great American War of Independence, and to have been continued in Europe in the national movement, which took its rise in the anti-Napoleonic reaction, created the German Empire, modern Greece, Italy, and Hungary, and cannot be said to have even yet spent itself. But, secondly, going on *pari passu* with this movement, we have the growth of international sympathy, industrial co-operation, and a community of intellectual and social interests, symbolised by such modern phenomena as international boards of arbitration, labour congresses, industrial exhibitions, postal unions, laws of copyright and extradition, and Hague Conferences.* So that the Europe and America of to-day, in spite of the development of greater internal differences, may be said to be more united than ever before.

§ 97. Moral Progress in Nations.

If now we pass from these indications of the growth in the civilised world as a whole of a richer form of social and political organisation to the moral ideas and habits which, as we have seen, must at each stage be its support, it is not difficult to perceive not only that there is a definite progress in the moral standard, but

* For the literature of this and kindred subjects see *A Library of Peace and War.* ("Speaker" Publishing Co., London.)

that progress here obeys the law of progress elsewhere.

Confining ourselves to the history of particular peoples and taking a well-known example, it is not difficult to show that, *pari passu* with the progress of the Jewish nation from a rabble of fugitive slaves to a great and highly civilised nation, there is a moral progress from the first elements of a standard in the earliest form of the Decalogue * to the highly spiritualised morality of the later prophets and the Sermon on the Mount. A similar progress is traceable from the traditional and proverbial morality of early Greece to the reflective morality of the philosophers. The progress, moreover, is one from "incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity." We have, on the one hand, a movement towards greater differentiation, as when the general principles laid down in the Ten Commandments expand into the Book of the Covenant or the particularity of the Sermon on the Mount,† or when the μηδὲν ἄγαν, or "moderation in all things" of traditional Greek morality differentiates into the elaborate table of the Aristotelian virtues.‡ On the other hand, we have a movement towards greater unity and coherence. To this corresponds in Jewish ethics the movement from the externality of the law to the "inwardness" of the Christian teaching. The law is "contained" in the golden rule (*i.e.*, is seen to be related to the spirit or principle that underlies it as the particular to the universal), viz., love to God and to our neighbour. In the same way in Greek morality the integrating

* See, *e.g.*, Box's *Introduction to the Literature of the O.T.*, p. 54.
† *Ibid.*
‡ See *Ethics*, Books III. and IV.

movement is plainly seen in the writings of the philosophers, who merely sum up the higher tendencies of their time when they exhibit the various forms of the good which constitute the common standard as flowing from a conscientious interpretation of the duties of a good *citizen*.

Looking at morality in general, it is only necessary to refer to what has been already said of social developments in order to realise the work here also of the spirit of progress. Corresponding to the first stage mentioned in § 96—we have the virtues of filial piety, loyalty to home and hearth, respect for old age, and the first germs of honesty and truthfulness in exchange. To these are added, in the second period, respect for civil and military authority, courage in the battle-field, sense of justice in the council room and public assembly, and all those nameless elements which go to constitute the characteristic Hellenic virtue of public spirit. By means of these the narrow family or tribal code of early civilisation became expanded into the fair outline of the Greek ideal, born in tiny Peloponnesian communities and spread by the conquests of Alexander throughout the known world of the time. The steps from this to the Christian type have often been traced. Already in the Roman Republic we have to note a difference in the fundamentally important matter of the position of the wife and mother, and the comparative respect with which foreign nations and institutions are treated by Roman conquerors. The cosmopolitanism developed under the Empire, the worship of the Virgin, the consecration of labour in the monasteries, and the new position assigned to manufacture and commerce, represent a further advance on Greek exclusiveness. To the cardinal virtues of courage and wisdom are added humanity, charity, and

industry. The superiority, finally, of the modern over the mediæval ideal is sometimes denied by the *laudator temporis acti*, but is sufficiently certified by the single instance of the growth of toleration and the disinterested love of truth. Whether the modern movement is not, in another respect, of the nature of a return to the Greek ideal, which in general is one of self-realisation as opposed to the mediæval one of self-suppression, may be left to the reader to decide. If it is so to be described, it must be admitted that we return enriched with the gains of the intermediate centuries.*

§ 98. Illustration from Particular Virtues.

I may conclude this attempt to illustrate the conception of progress by again referring to the growth which, as we have already seen, has taken place within the field of the primary cardinal virtues themselves. We have already noted the extension and differentiation that have taken place in the field of courage (p. 216). It only remains to notice the accompanying integration corresponding to the deepening of the consciousness of the significance of the virtue. For it is just the relation which courage is felt to bear to human progress in general which, while opening up new fields for its exercise, places the new forms thus generated, as well as the forms previously recognised, in closer relation to one another, and to virtue as a whole. A Greek would have been at a loss how to class the forms of virtue which we have mentioned above as typical of our own time. He could hardly have denied that they were *like* courage, but without the fully developed notion of human brotherhood he would have found it difficult to

* On all this see Comte's *Pos. Phil.*, Vol. II., *Pos. Pol.*, Vol. III. (Eng. tr.), and Lecky's *History of European Morals*.

invent a formula which could have given the clue to the underlying identity. We, on the other hand, while recognising new forms of bravery, perceive them only to be extensions of it, required by wider conceptions of that "society" in relation to which alone it has meaning.

Similarly, the range of the virtue of self-control has immensely widened. To take a single example, under the influence of new conceptions of the position of women which were contained in germ in the Christian religion, a new emphasis came to be laid on the virtue which, under the names of chastity and chivalry, is more than any other the keystone of the modern form of social organisation. With this widening has gone hand in hand, as in the case of courage, a new conception of the relation of all forms of self-control to one another, and to virtue as a whole. So long as the view was confined to the narrow field of the Greek community, it was difficult to see what was the precise relation of chastity to the other forms of temperance and to virtue as a whole. Accordingly, as is well known to any one familiar with Greek literature, it was the virtue most to seek in the character of the average good citizen. Even Socrates plays with unnameable forms of its corresponding vice, while Plato proposes a special exemption from its requirements as the reward of the youthful heroes in his "Republic." As a matter of fact, in the so-called military age, and in military circles in industrial ages, it has always tended to fall into the background.* It is only in view of a higher

* "It is not without reason that the earliest mythology united Ares and Aphrodite."—Aristotle, *Politics*, II., 9; see the whole passage. This is one of the features remarked upon by Spencer as characteristic of the military age. See Collins' *Epitome*, ch. xxii., s. 315.

conception of the rights of women, as members of a universal fellowship and joint-partners in a common good, that the true significance of the virtue, and the relation of its various forms to one another and to the universal moral order, comes into sight.

§ 99. Summary.

Similar illustrations of the view for which I am contending might be drawn from the rise of the virtues of humility, mercy, truth, tolerance, class justice, esprit de corps,* but sufficient has perhaps been said to show that the actual standard at any particular period, while undoubtedly relative to the special circumstances of the time and country, is not on that account an isolated and accidental phenomenon, but takes its place as a stage in the evolution of a universal moral order, from its relation to which in the last resort it derives its significance.† The practical conclusion to which the

* A simple example of the process of differentiation spoken of above is the Latin *pietas*, which is now represented by several virtues, chiefly those classed under involuntary social relations. Max Müller somewhere mentions a people (the Hawaiians) who have only one word (*aloha*) for love, friendship, gratitude, benevolence, and respect.

† The "universality" which is thus opposed to the "relativity" of the standard must not be misunderstood. After what has been already said, it cannot, of course, mean that morality can ever come to be "the same for all"; duty is duty just because it is different for all. Nor can it mean the "finality" of any conceivable moral code. We have already seen sufficient reason to distrust the conception of a final or absolute ethics. It cannot even mean merely the "ubiquity" of the highest recognised standard, though this is undoubtedly an element in it. The moral order which is being evolved must be conceived of as universal chiefly in the sense

preceding discussion points is that moral obligation at any particular stage rests, not merely on the call to maintain a particular form of moral organisation, but to maintain and forward the cause of moral order as a whole.*

§ 100. Further Question.

But before we can regard this conclusion as satisfactorily established, we have to encounter the second of the two questions which we met with at the end of the last chapter. Duty or obligation, as I have already had occasion repeatedly to point out, rests on a personal interest in a moral order, which when it is reflected upon we recognise as "good," *i.e.*, as the revelation to man of what he himself truly is or has it in him to become. But how, it may be asked, can such an interest come to attach to the moral order, the law of whose evolution we have just been describing, if, as is commonly added, not only the lines which it follows coincide with those of biological evolution, but the cause which is at work in producing it is in both cases the same? If, as is claimed, the process has been determined throughout by the natural law of adaptation to environment and survival of the fittest, and is thus explicable without reference to any free self-determination on the part of man, in what sense, it may be asked, can the result of the action of this

that it represents the demands of the universal or rational element in human nature. This will become clearer in the light of considerations which I reserve for the next chapter.

* The endeavour to further evolution, especially that of the human race, has been put forward by scientific writers as a "new duty." It would be better to say that it is fundamental aspect of old ones.

biological law, viz., the existing moral order, be said to represent such a good? To answer this question, it is necessary that we should face more definitely than we have yet done the problem of the source or spring of the moral evolution we have been following, in order to see whether it is true, as has just been suggested, that in accepting the evolutionist's statement of the course that moral evolution takes, we necessarily accept his account of the cause that explains it.

Simply stated, the question is whether the enlargement and enrichment of the moral standard, which we have shown to be taking place, are sufficiently explained as the result of a merely natural process of adaptation to environment, determined, like biological evolution, at each step from without; or whether there is not also required a reference to the action, at each stage, of a self-conscious intelligence, seeking its good as such, and evolving step by step from the raw material of its surroundings a system of social relations, in the maintenance and development of which that good may be found. The question, it will be acknowledged, is an important one at the stage of our argument at which we have arrived. For if the evolution is after all *merely* natural in the sense of being determined wholly from without, the objections which we have ourselves urged against the scientific or evolutionary doctrine of the standard of morality will be found to apply after all, though at a later stage of the investigation and in a somewhat different form, to our own account. Unless the results of the progress can be shown more clearly than hitherto in this argument to be already in some sense contained or foreshadowed in the constitution of human nature itself, obligation, which we have seen to depend on the

relation between conduct and spiritually conceived good, is still without a foothold, even on the supposition of a universal moral order.

If we are to bring together the results just obtained with those of our previous argument, we cannot refuse to consider this difficulty.

CHAPTER III.

THE STANDARD AS IDEAL.

Part I.

§ 101. The Question involves Metaphysical Considerations.

The difficulty raised, but left unsolved, at the end of the last chapter, shortly stated, is: Whether progress in morality generally is explicable in terms of efficient causes as the result of adjustment to environment, as ordinarily interpreted *; or whether it does not involve a reference to an end or ideal more or less consciously conceived by a subject, to whom changes in the environment and the adjustments rendered necessary by them are merely the opportunity for further self-realisation. So stated, the question introduces wide issues, which I cannot hope in the last chapter of a text-book like the present to treat as they deserve. Thus, to be satisfactorily answered, it would require to be discussed in close connection with the general question of the relation of the self or conscious subject as a whole to the world which constitutes its

* A closer investigation seems to show that something more than efficient causes must be assumed as operative in all biological adaptation. See H. Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, Chap. I.

object or environment. This, however, would involve me in the metaphysical discussions which at the outset I abjured; so that I seem to be caught in the dilemma of either abruptly ending my argument in the face of an unsolved difficulty, or using my last chapter to break new ground and pass beyond our self-imposed limits. The latter seems the preferable alternative, to which the reader may be reconciled if he will recall that in the last two or three sections we have admittedly been prospecting on the marches of that thorny region. In the following section I shall ask him to step across and take a look at things at home as they present themselves from the other side, at the same time promising not to lead him further than is necessary in order to get a clearer view of the point we have reached and the path by which we have come.

§ 102. Consciousness as Active Principle in Knowledge.

The prima-facie view of the relation of the conscious subject to the external world is that the knowledge of the latter is impressed upon it from without. The subject is the passive receptacle of feelings, sensations, and ideas which *come* to it. Progress consists in the storage, classification, and acquired power of recalling and utilising these possessions at the proper moment. A little reflection, however, is sufficient to dispel the illusion on which this view is based. Thus, to take the lowest element in knowledge, it is a commonplace of the text-books to point out that in the last analysis the so-called external world reduces itself to the unknown cause of sensational stimuli imparted to the physical organism. In a certain sense it may be said that differences in sensation depend

on differences in the stimuli. But it is equally true to say that it is our own sentient organism which breaks up a single homogeneous stimulus of material change as a prism breaks up the white ray of light, and that, as one writer puts it, "out of what is in itself an undistinguishable, swarming continuum, devoid of distinction or emphasis, *our senses make for us* a world full of contrasts, of sharp accents, of abrupt changes, of picturesque light and shade." So that even on the plane of the senses which we share with the lower animals, the world of knowledge is not so much a revelation of an external universe as a revelation of our own nature as sentient beings.

Coming to the subject or self, as a conscious principle of unity amid the variety of presentations, reflection forces upon us the same correction of common sense from a deeper point of view. It is not, of course, contended that the mind can evoke knowledge from its inner consciousness, any more than sensations can call themselves into being without aid from external stimuli. What is asserted is, that it does not approach the world as a passive receptacle, or a *tabula rasa*, on which the world to be known imprints itself. From the outset it is an active principle of interpretation, to which the world comes as a system of signs, like the signals received by the clerk at a telegraphic depôt, rather than as a reflection in a mirror, or the impression imprinted by the seal upon the wax. Moreover, the standard of interpretation is furnished by itself; and the world which it builds up out of the material supplied it from without * is a memorial to the fundamental principles it brings with

* I use the popular language in permitting myself to speak of signs, material, etc., coming from *without*. Metaphysics, of course, has something further to say on this externality.

it to the work (*i.e.*, to the chief features of its own inner nature), rather than to any world that exists independently of it.

§ 103. The Unity of the World as Postulate of Thought.

The detailed account of these principles is the subject-matter of philosophy as the theory of knowledge and reality. It is sufficient for our purpose to point out that the primary feature which distinguishes a conscious self from a merely sentient subject is that it asserts its "personal identity" as the underlying unity of its transient experiences. Even in its most elementary stage, the world of such a self is a unity in a sense which it is not (apparently) to the lower animals. Indeed the fundamental principle it brings with it to the interpretation of the signs supplied it from without is that they should form an intelligible unity or whole. This is the ideal to which, even at its most elementary stage, the mind demands that knowledge shall correspond. If it has no other unity to the mind of the savage or the child, the world at least possesses the unity of being in one space, its events in one order of succession in time. But this order is not something merely given. It is the mind's first effort to embody its ideal in the data of experience. Advance, moreover, does not come from without by the mere heaping up of experiences. It is an advance to higher forms of unity among them, and this advance is forced upon the subject by the demand which its own nature, as active intelligence, makes upon it,—the demand, namely, to see in the so-called external world an ever more perfect embodiment of the ideal of unity which itself supplies. From

this point of view, therefore, progress in knowledge has to be looked at just as much in the light of a progressive revelation to the self of its own nature as in that of an unfolding of an external world to an observing subject.*

From all this two results follow. (1) The sciences, as they exist at any time, are not to be looked at as the mere accumulation of generalisations from experience and the deductions which are drawn from them, but as actual embodiments of mind. They are the best account which mind can give of itself—the up-to-date reflection or mirror on this globe of its inner nature. (2) Progress comes from within. New objects and events are the *occasion*, not the *cause* or primary source, of intellectual development. What Aristotle says of political revolutions is true of scientific progress: it is the outcome of great causes and small occasions. The fall of an apple may be the *occasion* of the discovery of a law which may be said to have remade the world for scientific men; but the *cause* is in the ideal of a self-consistent system of terrestrial and planetary movements, as that was conceived in Newton's mind. So generally

* "Nervous signs," says Bowne (quoted in W. James's *Principles of Psychology*, I. p. 220), "are the raw material of all knowledge of the outer world. But, in order to pass behind these signs into a knowledge of the outer world, we must posit an interpreter who shall read back these signs into their objective meaning. But that interpreter, again, must implicitly contain the meaning of the universe within itself, and these signs are really but excitations which cause the soul to unfold what is within itself. Inasmuch as by common consent the soul communicates with the outer world only through these signs, and never comes nearer to the object than such signs can bring it, it follows that the principles of interpretation must be in the mind itself, and that the resulting construction is primarily only an expression of the mind's own nature. *All reaction is of this sort; it expresses the nature of the reacting agent.*"

unless consciousness were the seat of an ideal of a completely unified world of mutually related parts, progress, in any intelligible sense, would be impossible. It is only in so far as the new materials are interpreted in the light of its own principles, and are seen by the mind further to fill out and illustrate the ideal it cherishes of completed knowledge or of a completely knowing self, that there can be said to be growth and progress in knowledge.*

§ 104. Conscience and Consciousness.

Conscience is only another side of consciousness. It is our name in the field of practice for what consciousness is in the field of knowledge. This fundamental identity is already indicated in the words themselves. Consciousness (*conscire*) is the sense we have of ourselves, as realised in the mode of activity we call knowledge; conscience (also *conscire*; *cp.* Old Eng. *inwit*) is the sense we have of ourselves as realised in conduct. Hence we may expect to find interesting analogies coming to light between them in respect to the relations discussed in the last paragraph. Of these it is here important to note (1) that the objective world of human relations is to conscience what the external world of experience is to consciousness. Just as we saw that, apart from the interpreting and constructive power of the human mind, the external world is merely a chaos of nervous movements, so, apart from the interpreting power of conscience, the relations and institutions of

* The psychological equivalent of this fact is contained in the familiar statement that intellectual effort depends upon *interest*,—interest being the emotional satisfaction which an object gives us as a possible means of further self-realisation. *Cp.* Dewey, *Outline of Ethics*, §§ xxxiv. foll.; also on general subject of this section, § xl.

society are mere physical facts without moral meaning.* (2) As the principle of interpretation in the former case is the ideal which the conscious self cherishes of a systematically related world of experience, representing its own complete realisation as a being capable of knowledge, so the principle which conscience brings to the interpretation of moral facts is the ideal of a system of moral relations, representing realisation of the self in the form of will. (3) As, finally, progress in knowledge was shown not to come from without, but to be the result of the inner demand of the self for a more and more perfect embodiment of its ideal of unified knowledge, so progress in morality has its spring, not in mere adjustment of the self to changing circumstances, but in the interpreting, constructive power of conscience finding in new circumstances the occasion for the further realisation of its ideal of rationalised and unified conduct.†

§ 105. Relation of Conscience to Social Environment.

If now we return from this somewhat abstract dis-

* The question is sometimes asked whether any sane person is wholly devoid of conscience. I am not here concerned to find the answer to this conundrum, but merely to point out that in proportion as any one approaches such a limit, moral relations and institutions tend to lose their meaning for him. To Hedda Gabler, in Ibsen's play of that name, moral sacrifices are simply unintelligible. She does not understand those who make them. Her dislike of such persons (*e.g.*, of her aunt) is merely the dislike of a clever girl to what she thinks stupid and unreasonable. If she had had a little more conscience, her dislike would have turned into hatred. For in that case she would have recognised them as persons whose conduct was a standing reproof to her own almost fiendish selfishness.

† On the subject of this section see Dr. Helen M. Wodehouse's *The Logic of Will* and my Art. *Ethics*, Pt. iii., Hastings' *Dictionary of Ethics*, etc.

cussion, and ask what is its bearing on the question with which we started, viz., the relation of the subjective element in morality (*i.e.*, conscience) to the objective "environment," whether primary and physical or secondary and social, we have to note :—

(1) That the above argument has confirmed from a new point of view the doctrine developed in a previous chapter, viz., that the system of social institutions among which the individual finds himself is only the other or objective side of the organic system of impulses and desires that constitute his inward nature. It is so because, as we have just seen, it is the result of the reaction upon his environment of a self-conscious, or, as we may now say, "conscientious" being, who seeks to create out of it a system of relations corresponding to the logical ideal which his nature, as conscious intelligence, forces upon him. It thus comes to the individual as a species of objectified conscience. It supplies him with an objective expression of the chief contents of the ideal which he himself, as sharing the intelligence and conscience embodied in these forms, is called upon to make actual. Practically, this is of immense value to him. For, in the first place, he is not left to the subjective witness of his own reason to interpret the demands of conscience. These are already writ large in the social relations into which he is born, or, as we previously expressed it, in his station and its duties. Secondly, these relations present him with a standard by which he may correct his own subjective judgments. Conscience,*

* Speaking of ultra-conscientiousness, Bradley says, "What we have to do is not so much better than the world that we cannot do it," and again, "I am not likely to be much better than the world asks me to be" (*Ethical Studies*, p. 16).

if left to itself, is liable to run into all kinds of caprice. Unless its judgments are constantly checked by a reference to actual social requirements, as by a kind of "double entry," it may easily be transformed from a guarantee of social solidarity into a principle of isolation and anarchy.*

(2) But, while the social environment is thus an invaluable aid to the individual conscience in interpreting its own ideal, the conscience is always reacting on the environment. A man's "station and its duties" is not the fixed quantity we are apt to suppose. It is not a bed of Procrustes to which he has permanently to adapt himself; rather it is a "leaden rule" which has to adapt itself to him. The good life is not, except in a society of Podsnaps, a treadmill of recurring duties, keeping a man in a state of stable equilibrium with his environment. It is a "moving equilibrium," changing and expanding as new circumstances arise to be interpreted by conscience in its own way as "further calls." New interests develop from the older ones, which, conscientiously pursued, tend to change the whole aspect of his environment.† While, therefore, it is true that a man's duties at any particular moment may be expressed in terms of definite social relations, yet, as a being with a conscience (*i.e.*, a moral ideal), he has "ideas beyond his station," and must ever be seeking new occasions for the exercise of his virtue or excellence as a man. Progress for himself and the society in which he lives depends upon his following their lead into new social

* It has been observed that Intuitionalist thinkers, who in their ethical analysis begin and end with conscience, tend to be individualists in politics.

† A familiar instance is when a man marries.

combinations, resulting in a richer form of life for himself and others.*

§ 106. Is the Ideal Social or Personal?

The question elsewhere† discussed here returns upon us with a deepened significance: is the ideal which is thus seen to be the source of progress primarily one of a better form of social life or a higher type of personal character?‡ Different answers will probably be given in the case of different individuals. Where sympathy and imagination are active, the inner call tends at once

* These two aspects of the moral life have found fine literary expression in Mazzini's essay "On the Condition of Europe" (see *Essays*, Camelot Series, p. 286). "Life is one: the individual and society are its two necessary manifestations; life considered singly and life in relation to others. The individual and society are sacred; not only because they are two great *facts* which cannot be abolished, and which consequently we must endeavour to conciliate, but because they represent the only two *criteria* which we possess for realising our object, the truth,—namely, *conscience* and *tradition*. The manifestation of truth being progressive, these two instruments for its discovery ought to be continually transformed and perfected; but we cannot suppress them without condemning ourselves to eternal darkness. We cannot suppress or subalternise one without irreparably mutilating our power. Individuality, that is to say, conscience applied alone, leads to anarchy; society, that is to say, tradition, if it be not constantly interpreted and impelled upon the route of the future by the intuition of conscience, begets despotism and immobility. Truth is found at their point of intersection. It is forbidden, then, to the individual to emancipate himself from the social object which constitutes his task here below, and forbidden to society to crush or tyrannise over the individual."

† Book IV., ch. i.

‡ For the points of contrast and the fundamental identity in the saintly and the reforming type of character, see Green's *Prolegomena*, Book IV., ch. v.; and on the subject of conscientiousness generally,

to be translated into terms of higher forms of social well-being. On the other hand, where sympathy and imagination are sluggish, but the will strong and the purpose earnest, the call may come rather in the form of a demand for greater purity of motive and more consistent character. Each of these forms of conscientiousness has its strength and its weakness. The strength of the former is the enthusiasm that goes along with it. Effort is inspired and sustained by the vision of the new heavens and the new earth. The danger is that the cultivation of qualities of character, on which, in the last resort, all social well-being depends, should be neglected for the sake of "quick returns" in the shape of increase of general happiness. The strength of the latter is that the will is bent on being itself that which, in so far as general well-being is the end, it must wish all other wills to be. The corresponding danger is that the essentially social character of all forms of goodness should drop out of sight, that scrupulousness should become scrupulosity, and that wholeness (in the sense explained in Book IV.) should be sacrificed to an artificial holiness. The two attitudes, however, can never be entirely separate in any one whom we judge morally good. Purity of will is only possible to one who is absorbed in the higher interests of life. On the other hand, unless we are to suppose it possible to gather "grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles," social progress cannot be safe in the hands of those in whom the desire for social improvement does not involve a keen sense of

ibid., pp. 323-37; Martineau, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., pp. 59 foll.; Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-60; Dewey, *Outlines*, § lxiii. I have elsewhere tried to illustrate the above distinction from the opposite ideals of Carlyle and Newman. "Cardinal Newman" (*Nine Famous Birmingham Men*, p. 223).

personal responsibility, and a high ideal of the kind of life required in those who claim to be its prophets and evangelists.

Part II.

§ 107. The Struggle for Existence as the Cause of Moral Progress.

The reader will have already perceived for himself that the answer to the question with which we closed the last chapter is involved in the foregoing argument. It only remains for me to illustrate what has just been said by indicating how the ordinary account of the evolution of morality requires to be supplemented, in order to bring it into harmony with the view I have taken throughout of the nature of moral judgment and the ground of obligation.

In the common account of the mode in which the law of selection acts in the sphere of morality, the emphasis has usually been laid on the resemblance between social and natural or biological evolution. Too little attention has been paid to the difference that, whereas in the case of the lower animals and of man in the earlier stages of his development survival of the fittest is purchased at the price of the destruction of the unfit, in the later stages of social evolution this is less and less the case. The conquest of Canaan by the Jews does not appear, in spite of the reiterated instructions of priests and prophets, to have been followed by the extirpation of the inhabitants of the land. Nor were the conquests of the Greeks and Romans followed, as a rule, by the annihilation of their enemies. The reason of this difference is that with the growth of humanitarian feeling the conflict came to be

one between social and moral ideals, rather than between nations as physical aggregates. The aim of the conqueror is not to exterminate, but to "convert" the conquered by imposing his ideal upon him. As a rule he succeeds, as when Greek culture and modes of thought overspread the East in the track of the armies of Alexander; or when (to take a modern instance) the expeditions of the Revolution armies under Napoleon carried the ideals of the French Republic through the length and breadth of Europe.* In other cases the ideal of the conquered has coalesced with or even overcome that of the conquerors, as was notably the case on the conquest of Greece and Judæa by Rome, and of Rome itself by the Goths; *Victi victoribus leges dederunt.*

The conflict of ideals within a particular society serves still better to illustrate this distinction. If swords have not yet been beaten into ploughshares or spears into pruning-hooks, they have been exchanged for the pen, the platform, the garden party, and the government circular. The end is victory as before, but the means are persuasion and education (which, as has been well said, is only an organised method of persuasion). So far from exterminating, or even injuring, its political opponent, a victorious party heaps coals of fire upon

* Substituting, *e.g.*, in Germany, the Code Napoléon for the feudal system of land tenure that had previously existed, and leaving a tradition of good government in the States of Central Italy. At the present moment we have in Alsace-Lorraine an interesting conflict proceeding between the French and German ideals of life and organisation. As Gladstone once pointed out, the justification of the retention of these provinces by Germany will be its power of morally assimilating them with itself, *i.e.*, of imposing its ideal upon them. On the subject of this paragraph see Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 353 foll.

its head by educating its children in the victorious and presumably the better ideas.

§ 108. The Economic Factor in Progress.

To complete this sketch of the evolutionary account of the action of "natural law in the spiritual world," it remains to notice the view of certain writers, according to whom all the great steps in moral progress are connected with economic changes which are thus presented to us as the real determining factors in the growth of civilisation. The spread of humanitarian feeling and ideas in the early Roman empire is thus claimed as the result of the changes which followed upon the break-up of the older agricultural basis of society in Italy and throughout the world, the development of vast industries directed by merchant princes, and the universal system of trade and finance introduced by Roman capitalists. Similarly, the change from slavery to serfdom is ascribed to changed material conditions. With conquest the supply of slaves had ceased. As the internal traffic thus became abridged the tendency manifested itself to transform slaves into an hereditary possession attached to a particular family and feudal estate. The release of the serfs in the middle ages, which by some is claimed as a step in moral progress, only followed the break-up of the social system which had rendered it necessary for the baron to support crowds of small owners or crofters upon the soil. So far from being a moral movement, it presents the appearance, in England at least, of a cruel expropriation of peasant proprietors. Slave-emancipation, in more recent times, was, in like manner, the result of the discovery that the system of industry

founded upon slavery was an unprofitable one, and unable to compete with free labour. The French Revolution and all the moral enthusiasm it awakened are declared to have had their roots and to find their explanation in the break-down of an effete system of national finance, as is well known to all readers of the Second Book of Carlyle's History of that event.*

§ 109. How this Account requires to be Supplemented.

Now if these facts are put forward as representing the external or material aspect of moral progress, their importance can hardly be exaggerated. The study of them bears much the same relation to ethics as physiology does to psychology. If, however, they are put forward as a complete account of the origin and growth of *moral ideas*, we shall find reason in the preceding argument for being on our guard. As *ideas* these are in the mind, as *moral* ideas in the conscience of individual men, and in neither case can they be simply consequences of material changes. So far from external changes being the cause of them, these changes are only operative as occasions of progress in so far as they are interpreted by the reason and conscience of individuals in the way explained above. The struggle for existence has undoubtedly tended to promote the survival of tribes whose solid and coherent organisation rendered them the fittest, and accordingly may be said to be one of the conditions

* At the present moment it might be claimed that the same thesis is being vividly illustrated in the Congo, where the changes being inaugurated by the Belgian Government in the name of humanity are in reality necessitated by the exhaustion both of labour and rubber that has been brought about by the present régime.

of the evolution of those virtues which, like loyalty to king or chief, went to support this organisation. But this is only one side, the *out*side of the truth. Before the solidarity must have been the *loyalty*; and before the loyalty, or constituting the loyalty, some *idea* in the mind of the individual of a common purpose to be served by it.

It is not, of course, maintained that at the early stage of evolution referred to we are to look for a fully developed conscience any more than for a fully developed reason. Nor is it implied that, even in the case of what is strictly styled conscientious conduct, the rational purpose it subserves is always, or even usually, made the object of conscious reflection. Just as a city, a cathedral, or a political constitution, may seem to grow spontaneously out of the isolated and undirected labours of many generations, and yet may afterwards be seen to exhibit a unity of plan and fulfil a purpose which none of the artificers can be said consciously to have conceived, so the social ends of order and progress may be seen to be served by individuals who are only in the vaguest way conscious of the relation of their actions to them.*

What is contended for in the above example (and the parallel instances just referred to if rightly interpreted support the contention) is that, so far as there is consciousness at all (*i.e.*, so far as we can say that we are

* As an historical instance the student may take the rise of the Roman Empire. The senates and comitia, the magistrates and generals who laid the foundations of that great superstructure were only in the vaguest way conscious of any world-wide purpose that was to be served by it. The rationale of the whole process can hardly be said to have been brought to clear self-consciousness until it came to be interpreted by the genius of the poet Vergil.

dealing with *human* history), there is involved in its presence more than a mere instinctive response to altered circumstances or adaptation to a new environment. This something more is, in the case of the loyal member of the community, an interpretation of the circumstances as an occasion to realise an end which belongs to him as a man. Whether this end is conceived of in terms of internal worth—in which case the circumstances would be interpreted as an occasion for exhibiting the qualities and developing the character of a man, or of social good—in which case the conduct would seem to be demanded by the

> "Relations dear, and all the charities
> Of father, son, and brother,"

it does not matter. The point is that this *conception* is there in however vague a form as an ideal, and, as such, is the vital element in the stage of progress represented by our illustration.

Similarly in the other examples which were cited above. The Jews were no doubt forced into closer union under their theocratic government by the pressure of their environment, and the necessity to present a solid resistance to their enemies. But to interpret this necessity in terms to which the human spirit could respond, to formulate the duties which were involved in the maintenance of their peculiar form of organisation as elements in a national life, and incorporate them in such a body of moral and religious precept as we find in their literature, was the work of the *idealising* reason of successive generations of lawgivers, judges, and priests. Humanitarian ideas began to spread after Roman conquest had broken down the proud isolation of Jew and Greek;

but before the new conditions introduced by the *Pax Romana* could become the occasion of a moral advance, they required the moral enthusiasm of the Christian apostles* and the reflective insight of the Stoic philosophers to interpret them. The Protestant form of Church organisation is likely to survive the Roman Catholic, owing to its superior adaptation to the environment; but part of that environment is just the demand of the human spirit for liberty of thought and conscience as an essential element in the ideal of human good. The democratic form of government is undoubtedly that which is best adapted to modern conditions, and may be expected to survive and propagate itself; but it was the moral enthusiasm for the "rights of man" at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, and not the breakdown of an economic system, which created modern democracy.† With regard to slavery we have already seen how the moral consciousness of mankind protested against it, as early as the time of the Cynics (p. 134). In the middle ages, though emancipation was undoubtedly accompanied by a general change in the material conditions of life, it was promoted and con-

* *Cp.* George Eliot's fine saying, "The great world-struggle of developing thought is continually foreshadowed in the struggle of the affections *seeking a justification for love and hope.*" This radical and revolutionary function of the affections may be compared with what was said (p. 84) of feeling as a conservative element in life.

† Napoleon has been called "the matricide of democracy" in that while it was the democratic movement in Europe which may be said to have given him birth, he did his best to strangle it. He might have succeeded if democracy were the effect merely of adaptation to environment, and not an elemental force in human nature, whose expression in suitable social forms an individual may delay, but cannot prevent.

solidated by the Church in the interest of humanity.* So of negro-slavery in modern times. It is true, indeed, that it was economically played out as a form of labour before its abolition came, and that, apart from the apprehension of this fact, its general abolition among civilised nations might have been delayed for several generations. Yet it may well be doubted whether, even after the discovery of its economic failure had been made, this would in itself have been sufficient to break through the crust of prejudice and habit, behind which the institution was entrenched, but for the moral enthusiasm which accompanied, and, on any rational interpretation of history, was independent of it.

Wherever, then, as in all these cases, we have, accompanying changes in the material conditions of human existence, an extension and enrichment of the moral standard in the sense explained in the preceding chapter, it is necessary to take into account besides the stimulus that comes from changes in material circumstances the reaction upon them of human intelligence, applying, in the method characteristic of it, a higher standard of social good than is as yet represented by any existing form of social organisation.†

* So early as the fourth century Justinian declares his legislation to be *pro libertate quam et fovere et tueri Romanis legibus et præcipue nostro numini peculiare est.* See art. on Slavery, *Encycl. Brit.*, pp. 134-6.

† On the contention in the preceding paragraphs see Comte's *Pos. Phil.*, II., pp. 280 foll., and 370, and Mill's *Representative Government*, ch. i., where it is pointed out in a well-known passage that "one person with a *belief* is a social power equal to ninety-nine who have only interests." And *cp.* J. Bonar's *Philosophy and Economics in their Historical Relations*, Epilogue; Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, p. 278. See also my own *Service of the State*, pp. 62 foll.

§ 110. Concluding Illustration from the Reformer and Martyr.

That this is so we may expect to become more and more obvious as the ideas with which the study of ethics makes us familiar begin to permeate popular thought, and new reforms are claimed in the name of a rational conception of human well-being. Under these circumstances reformers and martyrs for ideal causes in the past will appear more clearly in their proper light as the "interpreters and administrators" of a better human nature. As the power to explain the phenomena of their lives—their manifest disregard of all standards of individual or social utility in the narrower sense—is sometimes proposed as the crucial test of any ethical theory, I may close this discussion by submitting to it the view set forth in the preceding pages.

That the "naturalistic" theory of ethics fails to satisfy it, we may take upon the authority of the admissions of the most candid of its exponents.* On the view we have developed, on the other hand, these phenomena, however beyond us they may be in practice, are not incomprehensible in theory. The reformer we should define merely as one who sits closer than his neighbours to conscience in the sense above explained. He is the child of the ideal, as opposed to the majority around him, who might be described as "the children of the *status quo*." † But this does not imply that existing forms are meaningless to him. On the contrary, it is just he who most fully understands them, for he can see them as organically related to the ideal which he

* See Leslie Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, pp. 428, 430; Darwin, *Descent of Man*, c. V.

† M. Arnold's libellous definition of the English aristocracy.

cherishes, and as bearing the same relation to primitive conceptions of that ideal as the institutions or reforms he works for bear to present establishments. Loyalty, however, to ancestral wisdom does not with him consist in blind acceptance of its creations. On the contrary, such blind acquiescence in the *status quo* is treason to the idealising, innovating spirit to which, in its own day, the *status* itself was due. As has been well remarked, the opponents of useful reforms are drawn from the same class as at the outset blindly resisted the establishment of the form or institution to which they themselves blindly cling. Those who build the sepulchres of the prophets and garnish the tombs of the righteous are the children of those who slew them. On the other hand, in demanding the reform of institutions as they are, the reformer is only demanding room for a fuller expression of the ideal which they represent, and apart from which they are meaningless. He may be waging war against the forms and institutions which previous reformers have battled to establish, but in doing so he only carries on the work which they began, reacting on the given conditions as he now reacts.*

The true reformer thus feels himself the representative of the larger rendering of human nature for which many who have gone before have stood. Their ideal is his ideal. It is the very stuff of his conscience and of the soul within him. His deepest interest is to realise it.

* "Those alone are worthy to be called successors who continue or carry into effect the undertakings which former times have left unfinished; the title is utterly unmerited by blind followers of obsolete dogmas, which have long ceased to bear any relation to their original purposes, and which their own authors if now living would disavow" (Comte, *Pos. Pol.* I., p. 281).

No minor interest has in comparison any hold upon him. Friends, fortune, station, self-culture, life itself, are of value to him only in so far as they aid him in working for it. Apart from the opportunities, they bring, still more if they turn to obstructions (as they well may if, in order to retain them, he is tempted to deny the supremacy of his ideal), natural desire may easily turn to fear or contempt of them. For to him the vitalest of all truths is that he that loveth his life shall lose it, he that hateth it shall keep it.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

It only remains to attempt a short summary of the argument of this essay. In looking for the basis of moral judgment, we were led to the conclusion that it must be sought in the idea of an end, which, as the end of conduct, must be an end for *me*. With these "data of ethics"—viz. (*a*) moral judgments of right and wrong, good and bad; (*b*) as involved in these, the conception of an end; and (*c*) the definition of the end as a form of self-realisation—we approached the criticism of theories as to the nature of the end.

We first took up the older theories, which represent the end respectively as self-gratification and self-surrender. The defect of these theories was not that they start from a conception of the self, and recognise moral judgment as based upon it; but that they start from the wrong conception of it,—with the result that, instead of explaining moral judgment, they in reality explain it away. Hedonism does so by identifying the right and the expedient, and thus failing to explain how an "ought" or a categorical imperative can exist at all. Equally defective is the theory that the end is the sacrifice of all desire. Apart from desire there can be no action; so that the theory not only fails to account

for moral judgment, but leaves no place in a strictly moral world for the eager passions and desires which are the driving power of common life. The concrete life of social activity, as founded on desire for the good of ourselves and others, disappears on this theory altogether.

Both theories, while thus differing in their conception of the self, agree in being individualistic. If we represent the problem they had to solve as that of finding the link of connection between moral judgments and the maxims of conduct which flow from them on the one hand, and the idea of good on the other, we might say that they were both right in perceiving that the middle term, through which the solution was to be accomplished, was the self. The error which made the problem insoluble for both was that they conceived of the self in an abstract way, apart from its social relations, and thus robbed it of the content which might have given the desired connection.

Our objection to evolutionary ethics was different. We gladly accepted from it the organic conception of the relation between the individual and society. We objected merely to the way in which this idea was applied in ethics. After dropping the individualistic theory, we should have expected the writers in question to go on to a more thorough-going examination of the conception of self, which we saw to be the basis of moral judgment. Instead of this, they allowed themselves to drift away altogether from the idea of good as a determining factor in human life, and attempted to work out an ethical theory based on the mere observation on the one hand of the psychical conflict of egoistic and altruistic forces, and on the other of the struggle among organisms for existence in an indifferent environment.

Coming to the constructive part of the argument, we tried to show: (1) That the older theories were to be corrected, not by turning away from the idea of conscious purpose as the differentiating mark of human life, but by taking into account all the different elements of human nature whose harmonious development defines the ultimate unifying end of self-conscious beings. (2) That from the side of the purposes that constitute the will of each, it is possible to bring home the essential unity of individual and social good, which biological ethics perceived as matter of fact, but, owing to its naturalistic assumptions, was unable to justify. (3) That from the point of view thus reached, conscience may be seen to be the reflection in each of a moral order represented by his station and its duties, and the good to be expressible in terms of his social relations, in other words, of good conduct itself.

In the following chapter we tried to meet the objection that "a man's station and his duties" was not the simple matter that the name is apt to suggest, seeing that through it he finds his allegiance claimed by different, sometimes conflicting interests. In doing so we were brought by a new path to the idea of the integrity of human nature, finding ourselves forced to admit that social relations lose all meaning if we fail to interpret them as at once conditioning and conditioned by the interest which society has in the knowledge of truth and the enjoyment of beauty. But we saw no reason to believe that any of these conflicts concealed an ultimate pluralism of ends.

Coming next to the inquiry in what sense it is possible to bring moral qualities under different names and treat of them as separate virtues, we found that while in practice the individual may, owing to defects of nature or educa-

tion, have one side of his nature less perfectly moralised than another, yet in principle separate forms of goodness are a contradiction in terms. To be good is to maintain one's "integrity" as a man. The different virtues take their names and meaning from the different points at which danger to it is to be apprehended. Cardinal virtues, like the cardinal points of the compass, correspond to certain directions prescribed by general, natural, and social conditions.

Passing in the last book to the difficulty suggested by the changes and divergencies in the moral standard of different times and peoples, we sought to solve it by showing that these themselves follow a certain order and find their places as different stages of a general process of development, in which, while ample room is left for national differences of ideal, there is yet a fundamental agreement as to the main direction and lines of progress.

Finally, in further criticism of modern naturalism, we tried to show that the ultimate standard must be looked for not in the "environment" as anything external to human nature, but in the ideal of a world of consistent social purposes the equivalent from the side of the will of the world of consistent concepts which is the ideal of science. Not in any placid equilibrium with naturally generated conditions is the "end" to be sought, but in the ever completer development of "the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful, to endure pain and fear, to resist the allurements of pleasure in the interest of some form of human society; to take for oneself, to give to others of these things which admit of being given and taken, not what one is inclined to, but what is due." *

* Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 276.

APPENDIX A.

THE NEW INTUITIONALISM.

[*See Book II., ch. ii.*]

In the above chapter I have had chiefly in view the older form of intuitionalist, or as we might perhaps now call it irrationalist, theory. But since its first publication Intuitionalism in the old sense may be said to have passed away and a new form of doctrine taken its place. The older view was founded on the immediate and inexplicable character of our judgments of right and wrong. But we have seen how difficult it is to maintain consistently the ultimateness of these ideas. Conduct is judged right and wrong not in itself or in the abstract, but in relation to concrete ends of what is worth having or worth being for its own sake. We are thus carried from the idea of right to the idea of good as its logical prius. But it still remains to ask whether the idea of good itself is an ultimate, and if so in what sense? In the above discussion I have assumed rather than proved that actions and things are morally good in virtue of their contribution to, or their place as parts or elements of something which we may call good as a whole. But in making this assumption I have ignored the possibility of denying the ultimateness and indefinability of judgments of *right* while asserting it of judgments of *good*. In judgments of right and wrong it may be maintained we are concerned with conduct as a means conducive or opposed to what is good in itself, but in judgments of good and bad we arrive at a predicate which is further unanalysable, which cannot therefore be defined by its relation to anything else, and for which no reason can therefore be given.

This, as I understand it, is the view that Mr. G. E. Moore has recently developed with remarkable ability in his *Principia Ethica*. He starts with the rejection of "the Intuitionalist view that certain rules stating that certain actions are always to be done or to be omitted may be taken as self-evident." "These judgments are not self-evident since they are capable of being confirmed or refuted by an investigation of causes and effects," *i.e.*, of their relation "to

something else which is itself good." On the other hand he holds that judgments of good *are* thus self-evident. We have here something primary and fundamental for which no reason can be given. "Good is a simple notion, just as yellow is a simple notion; just as you cannot explain to any one who does not already know what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is." But while regarding "good the predicate" as thus indefinable, Mr. Moore is careful to explain that he does not mean to say that "good the substantive," "*the* good, that which is good," is indefinable. On the contrary, ethics has for its aim just such a definition. The reason is, that while "good" is simple, "goods" are complex, the highest of them, such as personal affection and appreciation of beauty, being constituted of the union of lower or lesser goods in the form he calls "organic," the mark of which is that the whole has a value different from the mere sum of the values of the parts. What these wholes are, the way they are made up, and the degree of value they attain through their components, are proper subjects of reflective judgment, and so far of definition and explanation. On the other hand we are warned against the attempt to apply the same principle of organic unity to these higher forms of good themselves, as though they in turn could form parts of any single whole with a special and communicable value of its own.

After this statement of the "principles of ethics" we should have expected the theory to go on to some enumeration of the simpler intrinsic goods and the principles according to which they increase in value according to their combinations. But here it is left admittedly incomplete. Such hints as are given as to what things are intrinsically good leave us with a sense of arbitrariness of method which is not decreased when we learn that only one other present-day philosopher, viz., Franz Brentano, has arrived at the same general principles, but that he differs fundamentally from the author in his conclusions as to what things are good in themselves.

The interest of this theory for the student who has followed so far the argument of the text is that it seems in turn to stand midway between the older Intuitionalism which we have rejected and the rationalistic theories we have hereafter to consider. From what has already been said it will further be clear that what is characteristic of it is not the assertion of the uniqueness of our judgments of good. Not even philosophers propose to substitute definitions for experience. As previously admitted with regard to

judgments o moral right and wrong,* and as Mr. Moore claims of yellowness, there is a sense in which the judgment and the accompanying feeling of good are unique. But this admission does not involve the denial that good is definable in a definite and significant sense. It is true that we cannot define yellow by breaking it up into parts, but we may seek to do so by indicating its place in the series of colours which constitute the spectral analysis of white light. In the same way there is nothing in the simplicity of "good" to bar us from seeking definable relations between things that have this unanalysable twang in a sum or whole of human good. Yet it is the denial of intrinsic relations of this kind which forms the central point of Mr. Moore's theory, and for which the sole argument advanced is the quite irrelevant one of the uniqueness of the judgment of good. Not only does the doctrine find no support in such felt uniqueness, but it can be shown to be refuted by any true analysis of our judgments of moral value. Along with all of these, as I have tried to show, and as will, I hope, become more obvious as we proceed, there is an underlying judgment or assumption of the existence of a whole or organised system of life from their relation to which particular acts and the goods they subserve have their value. Without such an assumption what, we ask, is the criterion by which "reflective judgment" can perform the function assigned to it by the theory itself of weighing the value of particular goods? Why again is it that lesser goods, like pleasure and the bodily senses, may enter into the constitution of the greater, such as friendship and beauty, so as to form organic unities, while these themselves are taken to be mutually impervious and to be incapable of entering into any more comprehensive organism of parts? In view of the actual facts of moral judgment, and the analogy of other departments of reality which seem to show a progressive tendency to the formation of organic unities in which the parts not only are reflected into the whole, but in a true sense, as in the familiar instance of an animal organism, reflect the nature of the whole, it is difficult to understand how any one can insist on the ultimate independence and unrelatedness of goods "except it were in support of a thesis." That Mr. Moore retains such a thesis in the background is familiar to the readers of his more metaphysical articles. But this is another story, except in so far as the breakdown of a principle of explanation in the world of conduct is not a good augury for its general truth.

* Does Mr. Moore intend to deny the uniqueness of these?

APPENDIX B.

PLEASURE-SEEKING

[*See Bk. III., ch. i. p.* 125.]

Is, then, it may be asked, the "pleasure-seeker" a misnomer? Is there in reality no such person? I believe that there are people to whom we commonly apply the term, but it is doubtful whether any of them is a pleasure-seeker in the sense that would be necessary to support the hedonist doctrine of the place of pleasure in life. In trying to get a clear idea of what is meant by the term as commonly used, we must distinguish between the man who lives by impulse and "pleases himself" and the connoisseur in pleasant sensations and enjoyable impressions. Between these two types there is a wide gulf, however much they may tend to shade into each other. Of the existence of the first there can of course be no question. But what is characteristic of him is not that he identifies himself with pleasure in the abstract, or has any clear idea of it at all, but that he habitually identifies himself with objects that have so little human significance that the pleasure connected with them is their most striking attribute. He seeks habitually the line of least resistance, and without sense of responsibility either to society or to his own higher capacities runs his life on the cheap, "taking things easy." The normal man through inheritance and education has acquired sufficient strength of mind to be able to combat carnal impulses and desires by a reference to the more permanent interests likely to be affected by his conduct and to face the effort required to banish the suggestion that is discordant with them or to hold on to them in spite of its seduction. The mind of the other is like a sluice with a loose gate. Suggestions of bodily or mental indulgence sweep unresisted through it because of his inability to face the effort required to keep inhibiting ideas of objects of greater moral value in the centre of his attention. We may call him a pleasure-seeker if we like, though pain-shirker would be

more appropriate. But the essence of him is not that he either seeks or finds an excess of pleasure in the things which he desires, or that he consciously goes about avoiding pain, but that he fails to find sufficient pleasure in anything that involves an effort of attention, and feels no pain in habitually taking the line of least resistance.

The second type is a far more complex and subtle character living on an altogether different plane. As contrasted with the mere sensualist he knows the value of the different sources of pleasure in life. He knows also the conditions of self-restraint and self-culture which attach to the full enjoyment of it. He is like Plato's philosopher who knows all kinds of pleasure and has a right to judge between them. The only point he has in common with the other is that like him he is without definite sense of responsibility to others or even to himself except as a possible recipient of sensations and enjoyable impressions. On the other hand we have to distinguish him from the man who *thinks* he holds this doctrine and even proclaims it as a precious message, but who, as his own case shows, is inspired by quite other ideals. That there are men of this kind is proved, I believe, by the existence of such teachers as Aristippus himself and such modern writers as Walter Pater, who preach a gospel of the absolute value of momentary impressions and subtle experiences of a generously beautiful world and yet, by their own labour in the cause of self-culture and of this same doctrine as a *gospel*, prove that life to them possesses quite other value.

When we have made the pleasure-seeker in the sense we are discussing stand out clearly from other types with which he is commonly confused, it becomes at once highly doubtful whether his attitude of mind is really a possible one at all. So impossible does it appear to be to treat objects as merely pleasure-giving that the pleasure we feel in them seems to depend entirely on our power of regarding them as possessed of some intrinsic differentiating value in themselves. If, taking the case of one of the nobler pleasures, we might venture to appeal for illustration to the poets, those are not the greatest, if indeed they exist at all, who hold nature up to us as merely a source of lovable impressions, but those who, like Wordsworth and Meredith, have recognised the difference in the value of impressions according to the degree in which they witness to the spirit of the Whole. Nor in cases where, as in William Morris, we seem to have two voices is it the "idle singer

of an empty day" that holds us, but the seeker after a more lovable, because a better, world.

This is the truth of which Mill records his discovery in the passage of the *Autobiography* quoted above. He had set out, like a consistent Benthamite, to extract the most out of things by an exclusive attention to their pleasure-giving quality, with the result that they all turned to grey. His remedy was to reverse the process and take them for what they were in themselves, exclusively of their pleasure value. The success he met with he called a paradox. Viewed in the light of what has just been said it was merely a singularly interesting proof of the platitude that consistently to take the sign for the thing signified—the pleasure for the object that gives the pleasure—is the surest way to empty it of its significance and therewith of its interest for mind or will.

APPENDIX C.

HEDONISM AS A GROUND OF PRACTICAL APPEAL.

[See Book III., ch. iii.]

In illustration of the defect of evolutionary ethics which is pointed out in the text, the important admissions made by L. Stephen in his section on Self-Sacrifice, *op. cit.*, p. 426 onward, may be quoted: "When we say to a man, 'This is right,' we cannot also say invariably and unhesitatingly, 'This will be for your happiness.' The cold-hearted and grovelling nature has an argument which, from its own point of view, is not only victorious in practice, but logically unanswerable. Not only is it impossible to persuade people to do right always,—a matter of fact as to which there is not likely to be much dispute,—but there is no argument in existence which, if exhibited to them, would always appear to be conclusive. A thoroughly selfish man prefers to spend money on gratifying his own senses which might save some family from misery and starvation. He prefers to do so, let us say, even at the cost of breaking some recognised obligation—of telling a lie or stealing. How can we argue with him? By pointing out the misery which he causes? If to point it out were the same thing as to make him feel it, the method might be successful; and we may hold that there is no reasonable being who has not at least the germs of sympathetic feeling, and therefore no one who is absolutely inaccessible to such appeals. But neither can we deny, without flying in the face of all experience, that in a vast number of cases the sympathies are so feeble and intermittent as to supply no motive capable of encountering the tremendous force of downright selfishness in a torpid nature. Shall we then appeal to some extrinsic motive—to the danger of being found out, despised, and punished? Undoubtedly,

that will be effective as far as it goes. But if for any reason the man is beyond the reach of such dangers; if he is certain of escaping detection, or so certain that the chance of punishment does not outweigh the chance of impunity, he may despise our arguments, and we have no more to offer. Against some people, in short, the only effective arguments are the gallows or the prison. Unluckily, they are arguments which cannot be brought to bear with all the readiness desirable, and therefore I think it highly probable that there will be bad men for a long time to come. By acting rightly, I admit, even the virtuous man will sometimes be making a sacrifice; and I do not deny it to be a real sacrifice; I only deny that such a statement will be conclusive for the virtuous man. His own happiness is not his sole ultimate aim. There is scarcely any man, I believe, at all capable of sympathy or reason, who would not, in many cases unhesitatingly, sacrifice his own happiness for a sufficient advantage to others" (pp. 429, 431). In this passage the following points are worthy of notice: (1) That Mr. Stephen still holds to the notion that happiness (though not necessarily the individual's) is the end. (2) That while it is true that the happiness of the individual and happiness of others normally coincide, yet they are different, and however near they come to one another, we can never be sure that they are one and will follow the same path. That which unites them in the good Man "is sympathy," *i.e.*, a feeling. (3) Hence, to one who has not the feeling, there is no argument for unselfish adherence to the right which would appear conclusive. If the connection between others' happiness and one's own is a feeling, you cannot tell a man he *ought* to have this feeling. It is sufficient that he has not got it. "Ought," in fact, has disappeared from our vocabulary. (4) But supposing the end is not properly described as happiness, but as a form of being; and the connection between individual and social good is not the subjective one of feeling, but, as Sir Leslie inadvertently himself suggests, the objective one of "reason"—supposing that pleasure, whether egoistic or altruistic, is not his end, but that it is in virtue of his *being rational*, not in virtue of his *feeling sympathy*, that we appeal to a man to set aside selfish considerations, we are no longer left to seek for "arguments" to convince him that *it will be better for him* to do the "right." In this case we do not appeal to his sentient nature at all, but to his idea of what he might be. It is on the ground of his being a rational self, incapable by his very nature of finding fulfilment in gratified feeling, that we are justified in setting aside all "arguments" founded

on comparison of pleasures, and appealing directly to an "ought." Apart from this "rational" or better self, which can be shown to be essentially social, and therefore only capable of finding fulfilment in a common good, there can be no categorical imperative and no morality. Whether there would be any good either in argument or appeal is a practical question depending altogether on the stage of moral development already reached. It is no good appealing to a beginner or to a laggard on the ground of principles which can only appear convincing to one who has reached the end. "Who," asks Höffding, "can speak of its future good to the caterpillar crawling in the dust?"

APPENDIX D.

ART, SCIENCE, AND MORALITY.

[*See Book IV., ch. ii., § 79.*]

THE difficulty which we feel in adjusting the relation of truth and beauty to social life—of science and art to morality—seems to come from the alternate pressure of two different points of view. On the one hand we feel that truth and beauty possess an intrinsic value of their own. The love of them is the breath and higher spirit of social life. Without them society might exist, but only in a degraded form. On the other hand we feel that truth and beauty in turn derive their significance from their relation to social good as a whole. Apart from their function of contributing to the satisfaction of human, which is social desire, they lose all solidity.

In the attempt to solve this difficulty two courses seem open to us. We may seek to subordinate social life to truth and beauty. This is the view commonly associated with Aristotle. "We work that we may have leisure," and since the "political life" involves "work" it cannot be itself the end, but must have an aim beyond itself. This aim Aristotle found in "contemplation," or, as we might say, art, science, and philosophy.* Or we may take the opposite line, and keeping "practice" in the foreground, may subordinate contemplation to morals and politics. This is the view suggested by modern Pragmatism. The theory that has come to be known under this name has hitherto been chiefly concerned with the logical question of the test of truth which is made to consist in practical success: that is true which works, and working means answering

* *Ethics*, X., c. 7, §§ 6 foll.

to purpose or desire. But this is only a corollary of the underlying assumption that the ultimate criterion of value is ethical.

These two views, while leading to opposite conclusions, agree with each other first in drawing a sharp line between theory and social practice, and then going on to apply the conception of means and end to solve the problem which they have thus created for themselves. In both of these respects a little thought will convince us that they are in error. Theory and practice, contemplation and social good are not two separate things. What, we may ask, is the good of a society which has no place for disinterested devotion to literature and science, art and philosophy? These are practical needs in the highest sense. On the other hand, what is the good of theory which fails to develop man's social nature and to carry on the world's practical mission of developing and unifying human capacity? Just by reason of this intimacy we must reject all attempts to express the relation of these two as one of means and end, or of subordination in any sense. It is true that, historically, science, art, and philosophy emerge as substantive ends at a later stage than "war and politics." "The Commonwealth comes into existence for the sake of *life*; it continues for the sake of the *good life*." But anthropology knows nothing of any human society whose outlook is bounded by mere life. From the beginning it is life moulded by thought and expressing itself in forms of art, however primitive. When, moreover, these emerge into consciousness as objects of intrinsic value, they are at once recognised, not as something different, but as one in substance with the social life which has been their nourishing mother—as only carrying on the work of the human spirit at a deeper level. This essential continuity Dr. Bosanquet has expressed when he describes art, philosophy, and religion as "fuller utterances of the same universal self, which the 'general will' reveals in more precarious forms."* However abstractly truth and beauty are conceived of, this relationship never really falls away. It is true that in the mind of the student or artist there may be no direct reference to the claims of society, just as in the mind of the practical man intent on doing his duty to society there may be no direct reference to the world of art and philosophy.

* See the whole passage, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 333. With this may be compared what the same author says about logical forms (*Logic*, I., p. 92). Will, we might say, like intelligence, is "many-sided, and its aspects, which are correlative to each other, lose their true independence by being drawn out in a linear series."

But this does not alter the ethical fact that it is the relation of hi work to the *whole* of life which, in the one case as in the other, gives it its value. Even the consciousness of the thinker or maker is not without its own witness. We are already familiar with the diverse senses in which it is legitimate to speak of conscience. Among them there are the literary, artistic, scientific, conscience in whose condemnations we recognise something more than the mere sense of personal failure to give adequate expression to a meaning or make a contribution to knowledge. If we ask wherein this "more" consists, no other answer seems possible than that it represents the weight with which the sense of responsibility to the totality of his world presses upon the worker. With this acknowledgment the whole artificial and misleading distinction between morality on the one hand, science and art on the other, drops away.

On the general question here discussed, see Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 312 and 415; Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–6, 182–6, 257–9; Dewey, *op. cit.*, §§ xxxix. and lxxiii.; Lotze, *op. cit.*, p. 61. On the relation of Art to Morality, Plato, *Republic*, Book III., esp. § 401; Aristotle, *Poetics* (Cassell's National Library), pp. 23 and 39; Bosanquet, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Art*, esp. pp. 58, 105 foll.; *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, "The Philosophy of Art," by Professor W. P. Ker; Palmer, *The Field of Ethics*, Lecture III. For literary expression of the same truth, see, *e.g.*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (Cassell's National Library); Spenser's Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh at beginning of the *Faerie Queene* (Globe Edition); Ruskin and Browning, *passim*, esp. the latter's *Fra Lippo Lippi*.

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